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*The Art of Being a Woman*



*The Art  
of Being a Woman*

by  
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## *Preface*

THIS book is an attempt at a natural history of women in present-day society. It describes the development of the young and adolescent girl, the situation of the woman who marries and the woman who remains unmarried, the attitude of women towards work and of mothers towards their children, and the problems that face the woman who is growing old. In each chapter I have pictured the woman who surmounts the difficulties in her position and the woman who fails before them. No panacea is given but I have tried to show the goal towards which, as it seems to me, all women should strive.

The catchword "feminism" has generally aroused suspicion or ridicule. When they speak of a feminist, people have mainly imagined an old or at least a middle-aged woman, obviously lacking in sexual attraction and compensating for her inability to find sexual satisfaction by pushing herself forward to defend women against real or fancied injustice. In this book I hope to show that the problem of being a woman affects more than the small number of women who have fought for women's rights. It is a problem to every woman in the world. Even the happiest and most successful woman will have felt at one time or another limitations and obstacles due only to her sex.

In these circumstances, many women have believed that they can succeed only by acting *as if* they were men. They have overestimated the chasm between the two sexes and tried

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desperately to bridge it. We can see how much tension and wasted energy must accompany such an attitude. Other women have caricatured their femininity and tried to gain support by making themselves weaker and more helpless than they really were. Both of these types in reality have accentuated their difficulties.

If the conclusions in this book are true, women can reach the highest development of all their possibilities by refusing to fight against their sexual rôle, or to make capital of it, and by going ahead courageously *in spite* of their disadvantages. It is only when they like being women that they will not resent their physiology and, in consequence, make it into a block to their development. The physiological differences between the two sexes are by no means as great as they are commonly supposed to be; it is the subjective attitude of women towards these differences that gives them their influence. The psychological differences of the two sexes are entirely artificial. This book will try to prove, without qualification, that there are no natural or inborn differences of character between the two sexes. Wherever we see differences, they are self-originated or, at the least, adopted because they have seemed to be the only possible course in the circumstances. By removing all exaggerated and overstressed differences, we shall see that all important problems are common to men and women.

There are many people to whom I am indebted for help or stimulation in writing this book. I especially wish to express my gratitude to my dear friend and co-worker, Mr. Alan Porter, without whose assistance and revision this book could never have attained its present shape. Through the whole book the influence of Dr. Alfred Adler will be evident; and it would be impossible for me to calculate what I have gained

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from him, in detail and in general attitude, through the friendship and collaboration of many years. His books, his lectures and his conversations have been a never-failing source of instruction, stimulation and encouragement. Many debts must remain unacknowledged, but I cannot end without a special word of thanks to Mr. Stuart Rose, who proved his interest in the development of my book in a most encouraging and concrete way.

OLGA KNOPF.





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## *Part One*



## CHAPTER I

### *Women in Past and Present Cultures*

Laws must be written in the heart before they are written on paper.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

"BY MARRIAGE," wrote Blackstone in the eighteenth century, "the very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended, or at least it is incorporated or consolidated into that of the husband." Through hundreds of years in Western civilization the dominant position has been occupied by men. The property, the earnings, the liberty and even the conscience of a wife belonged to her husband. The children themselves were the father's children; and in the case of any dispute they went to the father. Education in everything but household duties and minor charms was the monopoly of men. The inferiority of women was taken for granted in all legal and social institutions, and even the praises that were given to women showed that the "weaker sex" was thought fitted for a subordinate rôle only.

Oh, woman! in our hours of ease  
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,  
When pain and anguish wring the brow  
A ministering angel thou!

So women were regarded—they proved their true worth only as "ministering angels" for the comfort of men.

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In the past fifty years a surprising change has taken place. In almost every Western nation women have been admitted to legal equality with men. They can inherit and own property on the same terms; they are responsible for their own misdeeds; they can vote, sit on juries, take part in governments and follow professions; they have an equal right with men in their own children; their earnings belong to themselves. But a tradition that has held sway in European history for some three thousand years is not so easily banished. Women are equal to men on paper, but the common view that women are somehow or other inferior to men persists unaltered.

The change, if we think in historical periods, has been astonishingly rapid. In England, a country which in many ways helped to lead the reform, not till 1891 was the right of a husband to lock his wife up and imprison her at home first questioned. The United States were perhaps still earlier in attempts to equalize the position; but it is barely forty years since that struggle began, lasting eleven years, to establish the right of a married woman to her own clothes. The inferiority of women has been accepted so long, implicitly or explicitly, by men and women alike, that it has passed as a dogma into our educational methods, our literature and arts, and even our sciences. We shall give reasons in the course of this book for believing that, however legal inequalities may have been redressed, in the cultural atmosphere of our own time women are less valued than men. This cultural inequality continues, limiting the development of women and discouraging them, putting additional burdens on the shoulders of men, and gravely disturbing the comradeship and co-operation of the two sexes.

Men have not always been dominant in culture. There is a well-based theory that the patriarchy, the rule of the father,

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was preceded by matriarchies, organizations of society in which women occupied the central position. In many of the older civilizations we can see survivals of a phase in which women were the rulers, owned the property in the community, deliberated and made decisions, and even joined on equal terms with the men in carrying out wars. We do not need to go so far afield for evidence. In our own day, there are many tribes where the functions usually thought masculine are fulfilled by women; where the women transact business and the men do the house work. There are even tribes in Africa and Asia where the women are trained to a far greater muscular development than the men, can lift two or three times as much weight and do all the jobs which call for physical strength. It goes without saying that in such communities it is never suspected that women are inferior to men. We cannot say, either, that the tribes where women have the higher place are at a lower stage of culture than the tribes where men have assumed power. It is perhaps amongst the Australian aborigines that we find the strictest example of a "masculine" culture. Women are entitled neither to any social rights nor to the slightest personal consideration; and it is this fact, in the opinion of competent officials, that frustrates the development of races which would otherwise be capable of great progress.

When the first explorers visited Central America, they were astonished at the position occupied by women in many of the tribes. "The husbands were so much under subjection," they reported, "that if they made their wives angry they were turned out of doors and the wives even beat them. Such a husband would go to the neighbours and beg them to entreat his wife to let him back and to stop being angry with him." The women went to market while the men stayed at home,



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did the house work, spun and sewed. Property was owned by the women, or, in cases where the husband owned property, it was necessary to obtain the wife's consent before it was sold. Similar conditions can still be found in several of the South Sea Islands.

In one great civilization women were on an equality with men through all the time of its flourishing; and at the beginning had still higher rights. The Greek historians told incidents to illustrate the power of women in Egypt which seemed so incredible to scholars that they were never taken seriously. With the increasing knowledge we have gained from excavations and papyri they prove, if anything, to have been understatements. In the greatest times of ancient Egypt men and women were on an equal footing; and there is no period in history which better illustrates how full of charm, friendliness and ease the relations of the sexes may be. Women had their own part in business, in the priesthood and in social offices. We can still read of the career of a woman who started as a clerk in her father's office and rose to be governor of a district and "Commander in Chief of the Western Armies." In some respects women retained the signs of their previous dominance. A daughter of the royal family, for example, ranked as a queen from the day of her birth; but a son became of kingly rank at his coronation, and then only by virtue of marriage. After the nineteenth dynasty, however, the sexes on the whole were equal and neither had the higher privileges. Daughters could inherit equally with sons; they kept their own property; and contracts after marriage had to be signed by both husband and wife.

In earlier dynasties the women had a decided superiority in the family. The wife was known as the "Ruler of the House." She could divorce her husband at will, but the husband was

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bound to his wife. In marriage contracts we find the husband saying, "Thou alone shalt be free to go," and agreeing "to obey the woman in all things." The property of the family was owned by the wife and the husband had to bring a dowry with him, which was often provided for him by his mother. The women of Thebes sometimes behaved like the male villain of fiction: they took the man's belongings at marriage and then abandoned him and left him in danger of starving. We find marriage contracts, therefore, in which the prospective husband stipulated that his wife should "provide for him during his lifetime and pay the expenses of his funeral."

Where women have been dominant, succession has always been derived from the mother's side of the family; and the customary explanation for such societies has been that they were established at a time when the man's part in parenthood was not understood. In the Trobriand Islands the natives are still ignorant of the connection between sexual intercourse and childbirth; and in consequence the children are taken as belonging to the mother's family. Professor Malinowski pointed out the influence of this view on the social customs of the Trobrianders. Girls and boys are brought up as equals and there is no marked difference of valuation when they are adult. If we may digress for a moment, we shall find among the Trobrianders an excellent illustration of a point which we shall make later—that it is not always the most attractive girl who stands the best chance of adapting herself to her sexual rôle. When Professor Malinowski attempted to show them that sexual intercourse and procreation were connected, they were able to refute him with ease. The ugliest women in the tribe, they remarked, were just as much favoured with children as the more beautiful women; but it was inconceivable that any man should be attracted to them.

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A matrilinear society has one great advantage over our own. In the whole history of ancient Egypt there was never an illegitimate child. The stigma of illegitimacy has been a means of trying to safeguard paternity; and where paternal rights were not recognized there was no possible reason for revenging unfaithfulness or extra-marital experiences on the children. Whether they were born in wedlock or out of it, children in Egypt were equally their mother's progeny, and they were in every way on an equal footing. It will be easily seen, as we proceed, that we are by no means proposing a revival of matriarchy. The father's responsibility for his child is equal to the mother's; and we should rather increase this recognition than diminish it. We shall see also, however, how many evils spring from a possessive attitude towards their children on the part of parents. Children are not an extension of control for their parents; they are independent human beings from their earliest days. It is a shame and tragedy in our own culture that illegitimate children suffer from grave disadvantages and that in so many instances the influences around them provoke them to an unfavourable, even a disastrous development.

The whole great civilization of Minoan Crete seems also to have been in some degree matriarchal. In the sculptures and paintings which have been discovered there is a noticeable difference between the occupations of the two sexes: women are priestesses, charioteers, bullfighters and fine ladies; men for the most part are cupbearers and servants. And indeed, wherever we find in the ancient East the worship of the great mother-goddess, by whatever name she was known, as the central religious impulse, we are in touch with a matrilinear society where the chief respect was paid to women.

In one respect, and perhaps in one respect only, men have a

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physical advantage over women. They are more mobile in war; they do not bear children, and when children are born they do not nurse and suckle them. Even in matrilinear societies, therefore, we often find the men specialized as soldiers. While the women cultivate the fields—and women seem to have been the first agriculturists—the men hunt or stand ready to guard them. At first this was merely the most effective division of labour in the community; and so long as it was taken for granted that the mother alone had a part in the future of the tribe the position of women was not affected by it. The change from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal society must have been the result of two developments. First came the recognition of paternity and the possibility of tracing descent through the father. This in itself would not have given the superiority to men; and we must suppose that men, already specialized as soldiers, secured the upper hand where ever the tribe began to live by marauding. It is obvious that if a tribe gains its sustenance by conquest the soldiers come to occupy the central position and the importance of domestic functions decreases; and we shall find throughout history that masculine dominance has been strongest in “conquering” races.

When we come to Greek civilization and the first roots of our own culture, we find women in utter subjection. In Athens a wife owned no property, she was not permitted to appear in public, she could not sit at table with her master. She took no part in public affairs, and the only position of dignity and influence which a woman could occupy was that of a priestess. It is true that under even the most rigorous legal subjection of women the equality of the sexes is sometimes bound to reveal itself in their human relationships, and it would be impossible to conduct a society in which women were quite simply and

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invariably treated as slaves. There are instances of affection and devotion between the sexes in Greek literature, and Socrates could go so far as to observe that he had "long been of the opinion that the female sex is nothing inferior to ours, excepting only in strength of body or perhaps in steadiness of judgment." One sign of the low opinion men held of the other sex, however, is that on the whole women were not even thought worthy of love. Their use was for procreation and amusement, and even the tenderest emotional relations of a man were reserved for members of his own sex.

In some respects, indeed, we are in Athens surprisingly near to the Early Victorian ideal of married life. A citizen of Athens, Ischomachus, had managed his household in such a manner as to be "pointed out as a model for all Athens." "There is one thing in especial I should like to learn from you," Socrates said to him. "Was it you yourself who educated your wife so as to make her what she ought to be, or did you receive her from her parents already acquainted with her duties?"

"How could she have been so educated when I received her, Socrates?" replied Ischomachus. "When she came to me she was not fifteen years old. Till that time she had lived under the strictest supervision so that she might see as little as possible, hear as little as possible and ask as few questions as possible."

One escape from this lowly position was open, in addition to temple service. The courtesans or *hetærae* of Athens were often remarkable for their intelligence, their cultivation and their influence. They took a second place to the wives but in compensation they had far more freedom and, in some ways, respect. The name for this class is itself illuminating; only a *hetæra* was a "companion" or "fellow" to a man. There were

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courtesans who lectured on philosophy and the arts; and their lectures were not less esteemed than the lectures of men. Many Athenians attributed the wisdom and success of Pericles to the friendship and advice of Aspasia; and a notable courtesan was much frequented and admired. We might almost say, in fact, that the only way for a woman in Athens to achieve freedom and eminence was to abandon the contribution of a wife and mother and make use of her sexual rôle in "companionship."

Sparta excited the amusement and astonishment of the rest of Greece by the honour which it paid to mothers; and women in Sparta were accorded a far higher position than elsewhere. They owned property; they joined in deliberations; the part they played in the early education of their children was supreme. Yet the standards of life in Sparta were "masculine," as they were throughout Greece. The word for *virtue* in Latin (and English) and the word for *courage* in Greek both mean "masculinity." That Spartan women also regarded men as the superior sex we can judge from the witty reply of Gorgo, the wife of Leonidas. "You Spartans," a foreign woman said to her, "are the only women in the world that rule the men." Gorgo answered, "We are the only women that produce men."

In Rome the legal position was still worse for women. Everything was done to safeguard the supremacy of the father. In early times he had the right, if his wife were unfaithful, to kill her out of hand with no public trial; but later he could only do so if he caught her *flagrante delicto* and killed her partner at the same time. It was in Rome, also, that the insistence on virginity before marriage rose to its height. The overestimation of virginity is a clear sign of a patriarchal culture. It can arise only when men feel children as their own property and, if they are to protect them and take responsi-

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bility for them, wish to be quite sure that they are their own offspring. It is a fact, therefore, that under a matriarchal culture we find no emphasis laid on virginity or on faithfulness after marriage; but under patriarchy we find that women must be pure and that the Goddess of the Domestic Hearth, Hestia or Vesta, is herself a virgin. So, too, under a thoroughgoing patriarchy, we find that the greatest honour a woman can achieve, the highest position of reverence and admiration, is to be a priestess of Vesta or—what is much the same—a nun. It is necessary to elevate to a pedestal and sanctify the obligation under which young women are placed to reserve themselves for their future masters.

Although in Rome the *paterfamilias* was the supreme authority and possessed even the power of life and death over his children, a matron could have much personal power and influence. Cato the Elder, the strongest anti-feminist of Rome, complained, in spite of this suppression of women, that Rome was "woman-ruled." "Remember," he warned his fellow Romans, "remember all the laws by which our fathers have bound down the liberty of women, by which they have bent them to the power of men. As soon as they are our equals, they become our superiors." In one sense Cato was not wrong in his complaint, though his remedy would have aggravated it. Wherever women are denied open power, they will seek to obtain influence by subterfuge; it is impossible for a human being to remain satisfied in a condition of inferiority. We shall see later on that all the so-called "feminine" qualities of intrigue, deceit, fickleness and underhandedness have been merely the expression of a none-too-courageous attempt by women to compensate for their secondary rôle.

We can judge that women were not very contented with their rôle in Greece and Rome by the adjectives we find in

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classical literature describing the types of women who were in more or less open revolt against their femininity. A well-known philologist, Professor Oppenheim, has collected seventy such expressions; and it is worth notice that there is not one of them which could not be paralleled in modern times. There is the *integra*, who refuses all relations with men; the *frigida*, who spoils her husband's pleasure by passive resistance; the *semi-integra*, who will go so far and no farther. There is the *philostorga*, who is so devoted to her parents and her family that she can never think of giving them up to marry. We find the *lesbia*, who attaches herself to her own sex; the *virila*, who imitates and competes with men; the *zelotypa*, who destroys her husband's peace of mind by jealousy; the *docta*, the scientifically educated blue stocking. There is the *matrona*, who dominates the life of her children till they are fifty years old and over; and finally the *equalis*, the good fellow with no nonsense about her, who always makes a claim to be recognized on an equal footing with men. In between these types we have all the transitional forms of discontented women.

The same story could be read in the women who have come down to us from classical history or myth. All of them are types clearly deriving from a masculine culture, and they are still fit to be cultural symbols of femininity. We have Sappho, the woman of genius, archetype, patron and justification of all woman writers. We have Aspasia, courtesan and *salonnière*. We have Lais and Phryne, courtesans whose fame rested more on their spirit and beauty than their intelligence. Helen is the symbol for all women whose sexual appeal distracts and endangers the world of men and involves whole nations in catastrophe. Penelope is the faithful mother and wife, waiting in patience for the return of her vagarious



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husband. Clytemnestra is her antithesis, the untrustworthy and passionate wife, taking a lover while her husband is absent, plotting his death and executing the plot herself. Iphigenia, her virgin daughter, is the representative of pure womanhood, sacrificing herself for the sake of the whole community. Antigone is daughterly affection and piety.

At first the rise of Christianity seemed to promise women a relief from their oppression. In this new religion there was no longer a division into things lawful for men and things lawful for women, and the standards of righteousness were the same for both sexes. It provided them with a reason, moreover, for breaking away from the domination of their fathers and husbands. In consequence we find that women played a great part in the early spread of Christianity; and for the pagan Romans Christianity was the religion of "women and slaves." But at the same time the Pauline version of Christianity, with its emphasis on sexual continence and the chastisement of the flesh, really tended to curtail even those liberties which women had secured under the Roman Empire; and St. Paul himself was in no doubt that man was the head of the family and that if a woman wished to learn anything she should ask her husband.

In the development of the Christian Church, therefore, we find that women were reduced to a still more subordinate rôle. Their place was in the home—or in a nunnery; and of the two it was really the chaste and celibate nun who gained the greater honour. It was behind abbey walls that women had most freedom to advance in learning and in the arts; and we find in this way that women who had excluded the problem of love and marriage were often able to achieve considerable ability and influence. In the time of the Renaissance we find sporadic outbursts of ability on the part of women, and

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some of the most famous women of history grew up in this age. Lucrezia Borgia, for example, secured immortal notoriety by her cruelty, and Novella became a woman scientist and lectured in her father's place at the university. Even Novella, however, was forced to wear the clothes of a man to protect herself against the students. In the long run the Renaissance brought no improvement in the position of women.

It was the same with the Protestant Reformation. Many of the Early Fathers had seen in woman the root of all evil and the original cause of sin. Calvinists and other sects not only revived their views but strengthened them. It is worth while noticing that the persecution of witches—that terrible sign of the fear of women—was not a phenomenon of the Middle Ages, but of the Renaissance and Reformation. To be a woman was *ipso facto* to be possessed of a devil, and there were many sermons thundered at women to compel them to hold their tongues, moderate their incontinence and obey their lords and masters.

Just as the position of women had deteriorated wherever tribes or nations lived upon conquest, so also it deteriorated with the rise of capitalism and wage economy. Previously a woman's work had more evidently contributed to the support of the family; she was more easily seen to be indispensable. Now, when money became the medium of exchange and the man was the chief wage earner of the family, work such as housework, sewing, brewing and baking, for which no monetary compensation was made, fell into a definitely secondary place. It was man's economic dominance and his control of the purse which marked the final subjection of woman. Everything which the wife wanted came to her through the husband; and we need not wonder that if the degree of co-operation between them was small the husband

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felt that his wife, if she made any demands on his pocket, was taking away from him what he had earned by his own efforts.

Of course, where co-operation and friendliness existed, conditions were never so bad as the legal and social position of women might imply. Where the family was a true unity and the father saw that his task as wage earner was merely a part of the division of labour in the family he would not use his economic centrality as if it were his by divine right, and even money matters would be decided in common. Nor did the fact that "woman's sphere is the home" limit the wife's activities as stringently as it would in our own days. This sphere of hers was very large, and though she was "supported" by her husband she had many interests, duties and rights. The linen was spun and woven at home, the clothes were made and mended under her guidance, the bread was baked, the flour was ground, the beer was brewed, preserves, candles and soap were all made by the wife or with her supervision. There were not many families in those days which consisted of a father and mother and a child or two. Children were playing all around, the servants lived with the family, and if the father were a tradesman there were apprentices to look after also. Often the table was set for twenty or more and cooking was a considerable task and art. The mother had also to educate her daughters for their future households and see that her sons had some preliminary schooling before they were apprenticed themselves. A mother was thus the queen of a small state; she had plenty to interest her and could never complain of the narrowness of her activities.

The chief problem came with the age of industrialism and machinery. The more machines contributed to industry, the smaller became the traditional sphere of activity amongst

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women. The more intricate and widespread the power of money became, the less value seemed to adhere to any work which did not secure a wage. Economic competition made it difficult for a man to "support" a family on the scale which had been customary before; and need often made it preferable, or inevitable, that the wife—or the daughters—should leave the house and look for a job. In doing so, of course, they entered into competition with men; they left their own sphere and "invaded" the sphere of men. In this sphere, however, men had all the privileges and vested interests; and the average salaries of men are still far higher than the average salaries of women. Men found themselves less easily able to marry, and when they married they found it difficult to support a family. Now there was an exasperated competition where previously there had been co-operation; and new forms of co-operation had not yet been established.

It is clear that whatever the advantages of a patriarchal society may once have been, its rules and attitudes are no longer tolerable. Its chief claim to persistence was that it solidified the family in the person of the father; and so long as the father felt himself as representative of the family and accountable to it, it was, perhaps not the best, but at any rate an intelligible and useful social form. In our own day, however, the persistence of the patriarchal attitude could act only to disrupt the family and to decrease the possibilities of co-operation between the sexes. Most of the legal inequalities of men and women have been removed, as we have seen; but the belief that man is the superior sex and woman the inferior sex still permeates our thinking.

I am no feminist myself. The freedom that women claim can only come when men and women realize in their hearts that they are equal and that their interests in this world are

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common interests. Nor, when it comes, will this freedom be a freedom *against* co-operation, it can be nothing but a freedom to make the greatest contribution possible and to develop and train the full capacity for co-operation. As long as a woman can see an advantage in claiming the inferior position she will never be free. It should be stated, also, that the reason why women should be admitted to equal co-operation with men is *not* that they will spiritualize and ennoble our public life or our industry or our social relations. Many feminists, naturally enough, have made the mistake of arguing that women are equal to men because they are superior to them; and many anti-feminists have replied, still less logically, that because women are superior they are inferior. But given a fair chance a woman is no more spiritual or angelic than a man; and what has passed for spirituality has generally been submissiveness and withdrawal from reality. The reason therefore why women should be taken unconditionally as the equals of men is not that the more power they are given the more they will introduce finer standards and nobler aspirations. Women are human beings, just as men are human beings; and apart from their circumstances and their training their psychology is exactly the same. The reason for equality is that co-operation is better than antagonism. Co-operation would itself be the improvement we wish for; and on the equal co-operation of the sexes a far higher development of mankind could be founded.

But what do we see at present? Neither men nor women take their legal equality very seriously. It is still an advantage for women to pretend to be a little helpless. It is still an advantage for men to spoil women and pamper them. Men, and especially American men, give in to women with a generous smile. They allow them their liberty, they let them do what

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they like because they are sure that it cannot come to much. They act like a mother who watches her child's enterprises with equanimity, knowing that it will soon call for her help. At the same time they put women on a pedestal and worship them. How can this happen? How can a man at the same time look down on a woman and put her on a pedestal? Both attitudes are an expression of the desire to keep women at a distance, to push them farther off; and behind the generosity to women we can see actually a fear of women and a mistrust of them.

It is in marriage and sexual life that this distance-keeping is most obviously expressed; and it cannot be denied that both women and men are dissatisfied with the present state of sexual life. Women are either a luxury which a man can afford himself; or they try to be independent and refuse marriage, or even love, completely. The extraordinary energy and interest which American men devote to their business is not due wholly to competition. It is due also to the feeling of inferiority to their wives which they have, a feeling from which they cannot rid themselves. I think it was G. K. Chesterton who said, "The American business man goes home to his office in the morning." He is afraid of his home and he thinks that he can only gain love by buying it. A woman who wishes tenderness receives a cheque. Men think they can free themselves of all obligations by paying for whatever their wives want. They do not dare to give devotion or human interest—and, besides, they are too busy to do it. A woman, for her part, is trained to measure her partner's love by the cheques he gives her or the amount he spends when he takes her out.

It is not the fault of either sex; it is the fault of both. During the day a woman may work as hard as a man at an office or elsewhere. She may be as successful as a man and quite equal

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to him. But when she leaves the office in the evening she becomes a weak woman, dependent on the gallantry of men. She has to be seen to the door of her home or "taken out." "Taken out!" As if she were incapable of going out by herself! Women could vastly improve their own position if they would put their contact with men on an equal basis. How can a man respect them at work if they are poor dependent females in their leisure? Equal companionship in leisure time would help them to gain more respect in their work, also.

So far we have done no more than touch on the inferiority feelings of women and the difficulties of adjustment between the sexes. It is perhaps the most important problem of our civilization; for the whole future welfare of mankind hangs upon its solution. The sexes are living, we might say, in a vast communal neurosis; a highly contagious neurosis which parents pass on to their children and men and women pass on to each other. Fortunately in these matters health is as contagious as neurosis; and in addition to diagnosing the disease, we shall try to provide the remedy.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Formation of Character*

IF we are to understand the many different types of women, we must first understand the development of character in childhood. The coquette was not born, fully armed for flirtation, at the age of sixteen or seventeen. The "respectable woman" who frowns at her has a history to that frown. They did not inherit their differences. The best-informed scientist could never have said, when they issued into the world, "This infant is bound for a life of decorum. The other will always play with fire." Their characters are the result of a long training; and we can understand their differences only by tracing them back to their childhood and seeing where the two children began to diverge.

Twenty-five years ago, when Doctor Alfred Adler founded the school of Individual Psychology, he laid down for the first time scientific principles for understanding the development of character. He proved that the groundwork of every character is built in the first few years of life. He took us into the workroom of the child's mind. He described the situations which were of most importance in a child's development and showed us different children meeting these situations in quite different ways. He helped us to see why one child chose a particular style of action; and he pointed out the consequences of this choice, running through the child's life and influencing all his later expressions of character. He found, moreover,



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that every personality is a unity in all its expressions. It is the striving of an individual towards a goal in life that builds up and unifies his personality.

Later chapters will perhaps be easier to understand if we now summarize the findings of Individual Psychology. On one point it may be best to anticipate and mention a result of our inquiry right in the forefront of our argument. The formation of character never depends in the first place upon sex. Men and women are human beings and the relations between them are human relations. In most of the situations of life the fact that they belong to one sex or the other has no dominating influence over their conduct. It is one factor of difference among many factors they share in common. We shall find also that the facts which influence the feminine character remain effective as influences only in so far as the individual's attitude towards them demands it. It is never the circumstances themselves which dictate a course of action; it is the individual's interpretation of the circumstances.

Of course, the characters of men and women are very deeply affected by cultural conditions; and there are aspects of our present culture which play a far greater rôle than most people assume. The most important aspect, perhaps, is the traditional attitude to the two sexes. Here again we must try to make it clear that it is not the differences between the two sexes which are important, but the meaning people see in these differences, the valuation they put upon them, the different things they expect of a man and of a woman. It will be easy to see, too, that we cannot consider either men or women by themselves. The cultural attitude to men implies the cultural attitude to women. The two are bound together. Let us use a comparison and assume that the universe is an almond and the sexes are two nuts inside it. We could never understand why one of

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them had its peculiar shape unless we took the other into consideration also. The shape of one depends on the shape of the other. In a similar fashion, if we are to understand women, we must understand also the development of character in men, and *vice versa*. We shall be giving greater weight in these chapters to an understanding of women, but men will always be around the corner, contributing their part to the whole situation.

Yet we may say that women, on the whole, are more conscious of sexual differences than men. They are reminded of them more often by the functions of their body. The physical expressions of sex are more prominent in women—menstruation, pregnancy, labour, lactation, climacterium. A German gynecologist, Walter Liepmann, made experiments which proved that the output of physiological energy is far higher in women than in men. A childless woman, he calculated, to make good her physiological losses must produce her own weight twice as often as a man; and a woman who bears children three times as often. Women must therefore render a far greater amount of physiological work than men. It would be mistaken to assume that this increased output of energy has a corresponding psychological effect on women. Their structure is adapted to these demands. But even where women do not know the precise amount of physiological energy which their rôle demands, they often feel at a disadvantage with regard to men and the valuation they give the fact influences their opinion of their own abilities. Considering themselves overburdened by their task, they limit their expectations and so put themselves in an inferior position.

We must remember, also, that in a masculine culture women are, as it were, the exception; to some degree they do not belong to it, they are not at home in it. This fact would

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also tend to make them more conscious of their position. We shall find, similarly, that Jews who live in a non-Jewish community are much more conscious of being Jews than their neighbours are conscious of being Christians or Mohammedans. A Negro in a white community is more conscious of his colour than the whites are of theirs. So women, living in a world where the norm is masculinity, are apt to take their own position as somehow irregular and abnormal. Many of their activities may be penetrated by the thought that they are women—and perhaps *only* women. Thus we may find in their characters less confidence, more self-consciousness and tension.

The first point that we must consider in character development is the unity of personality. Every expression, every gesture, every movement of an individual is one phase of his whole personality. We can never draw conclusions from a single attitude: we must see it in coherence with the whole. To understand an individual means to recognize the unity of all his strivings, to catch the keynote of his personality. If we concentrated our attention on one expression we should be very easily misled. The same attitude, the same gesture, in many different individuals may have as many meanings as there are individuals. A man, for example, appears to be generous. We still know nothing definite about his character. Perhaps he is really concerned with others and wants to help them. Perhaps he is satisfying his vanity: he likes to be the one who does a favour and puts others under obligation to him. Perhaps, again, he feels comfortable only amongst the unfortunate and by his attitude of help he is creating opportunities for indulging his feeling of superiority. For every characteristic, good or bad, we could find many different motives; and we should often make serious mistakes if we tried to under-

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stand an individual by observing and interpreting one single expression.

What is it that holds together all the expressions of an individual? What is the power that unifies his personality? It is his *goal of life*. Under all circumstances this goal is a goal of superiority. An individual is always striving for security, for adequacy, for self-preservation, for significance. There are as many goals as there are individuals; and we can call their goals by many different names. Every personality represents a unique attempt to master the environment, to rise above the difficulties of living. But common to all goals is the striving to move from *less* to *more*, from *below* to *above*. Life itself is movement, and this striving dominates the whole of nature. Even plants push upwards to get a place in the sun, to reach conditions which are more favourable for life and growth. The same striving for superiority is shown in every attempt of a human being to improve his position or to raise his status. But different men strive in different directions. Each individual has his own conception, his own feeling, of the way he must go to achieve the goal of superiority. One man feels he must know more, and knowledge becomes his goal. Another feels that he will find the increase of power he needs in money. A third wishes to raise his social standing. There are some who can feel assured of their importance only by controlling the lives of others. Many murderers have described the thrill of power they experienced when they killed a fellow-man.

Neither heredity nor environment dictates the individual's goal of superiority. It is his own creation. Outside circumstances may influence him. They can never compel him. There are two factors which enter into the individual's creation of a goal. First comes his childhood estimate of himself, his valuation of his own powers, what he feels himself to be like.

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Next comes his personality ideal, what he admires, what he would wish to be himself. The two are very closely involved. Where a child feels weak, he will wish to protect himself against defeat. He will establish an ideal of what he should be if he is to avoid defeat. No one can bear to feel everlastingly vulnerable and in the personality ideal are gathered together all those elements of strength, superiority and success which the child envies in others and would like for himself. Thus the personality ideal depends on the child's feelings of inferiority; and we might call it a sort of after-image of his own self-estimate. The means by which he tries to bridge the two make up his character. Every character trait is an attempt to reach the personality ideal in accordance with the child's conception of his own powers.

A child is surrounded by people who represent for him the ideal of power and energy. To be like these, he feels, will protect him from all evil. Father, mother, nurse, teacher, older sisters or brothers—all of them are stronger and more experienced than he. In his feeling of weakness he underrates his own capacities and exaggerates the capacities of others. He constructs an ideal picture of the most powerful person he knows; and, measuring himself against this ideal, he feels less than nothing. The line that runs between these two points, his estimate of himself and his ideal character, we call his life line. It is in this direction that he means to travel to achieve his goal of life.

In his feeling of insecurity, however, he will not rest satisfied merely to equal this ideal. He must go beyond it. He must establish a margin of security so that he never feels endangered again. He must be *strong, though weak*; whereas his personality ideal is just naturally strong. Unless he goes beyond his ideal, his original weakness might always reveal

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itself. This law of *compensation by over-compensation* we can observe everywhere at work. If a man breaks his leg, the bone will grow together again at the fracture; but when it mends it is larger and broader than before. His organism is establishing a safeguard against relapse. If a man cuts his hand, the tissues join again; but sometimes there is a still greater proliferation of cells: the skin is raised and we see a scar. So, when an individual's estimate of himself is low, he over-compensates by making it his goal to become the strongest, the cleverest, the most attractive—more than all others, better than all others, unique and absolute. He strives, in short, to become godlike.

With almost every child his personality ideal will be an adult member of his environment, and probably his father. As we have seen, we are living in a culture adapted to men; where men have the greater privileges and set the standards of human life. It is the father who will generally be treated as the most important member of the family. It will not be surprising to find that girls and boys alike take their father as their personality ideal. Even when the dominating position is occupied by the mother, the personality ideal will still sometimes be set by the father. It is not so easy to escape the cultural tradition of attributing more seriousness, more real value, to the man. He is generally the member of the family who guarantees its economic security. He is the one upon whom the fulfilment of the child's wishes depends. His absence from home during the day keeps him at a greater distance from the children and this helps him to appear greater and more mysterious. He is more of a law to himself, it seems; freer from responsibilities and duties, and so stronger.

The child's standard of comparison, then, becomes his father. We can often verify this quite simply. Many children,

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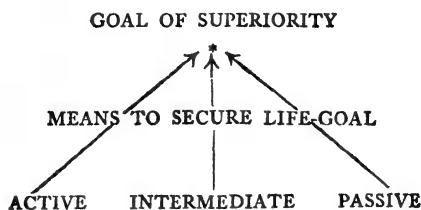
when we ask them what they would like to be, answer, "As big as father," or "As strong as father." Children early attribute his importance, also, to the fact that he is a man. Girls, as well as boys, will admire everything masculine and detest everything feminine. Masculinity belongs to their personality ideal and they will make it their goal to be as masculine as possible. Sometimes girls will even wish to change their sex; and many of them keep the phantasy that, somehow or other, they will turn into boys. Others, who know that they can never be men, will strive none the less to be *man-like*. They will struggle for knowledge or power over others as the nearest they can get to their masculine personality ideal. Indeed, the identification of superiority with masculinity is so widespread that we should not go far wrong if we saw every striving for personal superiority as a striving to be, or to appear, masculine. In Individual Psychology, therefore, the tension from which so many people suffer to assert their personal importance has been termed the Masculine Protest. We can judge how closely the ideas of godlikeness and masculinity have been associated from Milton's line on the rôles of the two sexes :

"He for God only, she for God in him."

The means chosen to achieve a position of superiority are, of course, multifarious. At one end of the scale will be those who proceed always by aggression, the purely active types. At the other end will be those who give way in order to conquer, who hope to succeed by submission: these are the passive types. And in between these two limits will come all the more fluid types, the people who try now one means and now the other. If we are being rigorous, we must treat these two limits

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as fictions. Every man or woman will be a mixed type; but we can call a human being active or passive in so far as he tends more to one extreme or the other.



With active or aggressive individuals, who show an open wish to dominate, the goal of superiority can easily be seen in all their actions. Sometimes it is not readily understood that submissiveness and passivity serve the same purpose. But children find out very early in life that they can get their own way by stressing their weakness and helplessness. We might say, in fact, that the strongest being in the world is the baby. He can do nothing for himself; and everything he needs is done for him. No one expects him to do anything in return. In this respect many people remain babies all through their life; and they find their helplessness an extraordinarily efficient means of extorting service from other people. Moreover, if an individual always gives in, always takes his orders from someone else, he avoids responsibility for any failure he might make. If anything goes wrong, it is the fault of the individual who misled him. Such a person always remains "superior" to his fellows. His godlikeness is unlimited, since nothing can lessen it or put it to the test. In later chapters we shall consider the special means which women are trained to utilize for achieving their goals; and we shall discuss why it happens that for the most part, these means are means of weakness and helplessness.



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We have already seen that the lower a child estimates his own powers, the higher he sets his personality ideal. Feeling doubtful of himself, he needs all the more self-assurance. He is so pessimistic that a small success would seem to him a defeat. There are many individuals who count it a defeat if they are not first in everything. The best and most favourable circumstances for the development of character arise when there is no large discrepancy between the self-estimate and the personality ideal. Here, perhaps, we must meet an objection. When we speak of the self-estimate, we do not mean the individual's avowed opinion of himself. We mean his real degree of courage and confidence. Many men, and many children too, are full of boasts; they are cocksure and seem to think themselves infallible. In reality, however, their cocksureness belongs to their personality ideal, not to their self-estimate. They are whistling to keep up their courage.

The sign of a high self-estimate, in this sense, is that an individual does not limit his own development through fear of failure. He does not excuse himself on the score of weakness and he feels able to approach any problem of life with full responsibility and to exert all his energies towards its solution. On the other hand, an individual with a low self-estimate exaggerates the difficulties of life and feels unable to make the effort involved in meeting them. He blocks his own progress by the deep-seated conviction that he could never succeed. Of course, he could never really admit that he was "inferior" to others. To save his face he must build up a very high personality ideal and attribute his failures to external factors that prevent him from realizing it—or, perhaps, to hereditary disadvantages.

If an individual keeps his courage, his goal of superiority will be on the useful side of life. He will engage in activities

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where others also may share the benefit. It is only a discouraged individual who feels the need to make a detour to the useless side of life. To such a man it seems too difficult to go forward on the useful side. He thinks that he needs special circumstances if he is to succeed at all—circumstances that do not apply to other people. Life must be made easier for him than for others. He must be excused from the usual demands of society. Perhaps other people can make a livelihood by useful work; but if he tried it, he feels, he would starve. Therefore he must swindle, or he must somehow or other force others to support him. If he continued on the useful side, he feels, his very life would be endangered. We are not describing what he *says* about himself or even what he admits to himself; but if we watch his actions we shall see that they are based on such a low valuation of his own capacities.

A discouraged individual cannot wait. To maintain a goal on the useful side of life demands continued struggling for accomplishment, the ability to bear reverses and to meet them with optimistic activity. At first a detour to the useless side seems an easier way. It blocks development, it renders it unnecessary to train our faculties and grow more skilful in overcoming difficulties, but it may seem to promise immediate relief. To come back to usefulness after a detour is much harder than to struggle in the beginning; but the man with a low self-estimate shrinks from every difficulty. Success always seems to him a matter of "Now or Never!"

Why is it that a courageous individual works on the useful side of life? Why does he concern himself with the welfare of others and even undergo difficulties rather than take an easy way out at the expense of others? This fellow-feeling, or *social feeling* as it is sometimes termed, is an inborn potentiality in human beings; it is the best equipment we have for meeting

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the problems of life with success. Even in days when mankind was very young and human beings, we suppose, were like wild animals, they had already recognized that they could defend themselves best against the dangers of nature by combining to help one another. And every growth in culture, every increase in scientific knowledge, every added security to human life, every additional grace and ease, has been the result of social feeling and has produced a higher ability to co-operate.

There are some animals which are strong enough to live alone and have little need for help from others of their species. Even among animals, however, we see some species which have increased their power by co-operation when individually they were weak. Men are the weakest of all animals in the face of natural dangers. Their only weapon is in their minds and their minds would be useless and undeveloped without co-operation. They have compensated for this weakness by the discovery of more varied and intricate techniques of co-operation than any other creatures. Every advantage that man has, every accomplishment of the past and present, derives from the feeling of inferiority before nature and the compensatory increase in the technique of co-operation.

Biology itself affords us evidence that fellow-feeling is an inborn potentiality. What would happen to mankind if no one was interested in caring for babies when they were born? The human child needs closer and longer attention than the young of any animal. Mankind would perish in a generation if there were no interest in others, if the feeling for others and the desire to help them ceased. We often hear talk of the "maternal instinct"; but the "maternal instinct" is nothing more than a special instance of social feeling. There are many women who have never borne a child, yet are as motherly as

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those who have. There are men whose "maternal instinct" is as prominent as any woman's. And, on the other hand, we have seen a woman who has given birth to a child and who supposedly by this very fact should find herself in possession of a fully fledged "maternal instinct," desert the child as soon as possible and care nothing about what happens to it. The "maternal instinct" has nothing to do with the physiology of motherhood; it is founded in a strong feeling of responsibility towards children, society, and the future of mankind, and in the desire to contribute to the lives of others.

We hardly need more evidence that we desire originally to strive on the useful side of life and we leave it only when we feel forced to leave it. But we may complete the picture and support our standpoint from another angle by citing the development of language. The sole purpose of language is communication and co-operation. If human beings lived alone there would be no use for words. And indeed we can often see that people who live more or less isolated have a poor vocabulary and a low degree of ability to express themselves. This is true both for those whose circumstances have forced them to live by themselves and for those who have preferred to isolate themselves through a wrong attitude to their fellow-men. When they are brought into contact with others, they behave as if they were amongst strangers or amongst enemies, since they do not know the words that are being spoken around them.

Only those individuals who have learned to co-operate will accomplish something in life; and the time when co-operation is learned is in the first four or five years of childhood. It is then that the interest of children should be roused in their surroundings and in the human beings of their environment. It is then that they should be trained to feel themselves a part

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of the whole world around them, friendly and surrounded by friends. By the end of the fifth year, the foundations of the character are set; and mistaken developments can be changed only by recognizing the mistakes made in childhood. But when the mistakes that have been made are grave, it is difficult to recognize them. People often fight hardest to preserve their worst mistakes. Their feelings of inferiority are then very severe and their personality ideal forbids them to acknowledge their errors.

Right from birth a child is beginning to take up his position towards his body and towards his environment. He collects experiences and uses them as the basis for future conduct. He generalizes and mechanizes his actions. If we were unable to generalize in this way, the whole world would be chaotic to us. It is the only means by which we can bring order into experience. A child, for instance, learns what a chair looks like, and from this one chair he learns to recognize all other chairs, even though they look a little different from the first. By such generalizations we train the memory, build up conclusions and learn to equip ourselves better through our past experiences for meeting similar situations in the future. At the same time, since no two situations or experiences are precisely the same, some degree of error will be involved in every generalization; and it will be easy to see that a generalization may often involve a quite considerable mistake.

In the first four or five years of life a child is making the greatest of all generalizations. He is turning over all his experiences in his mind, he is working them out until he can conclude from them the best way of securing his goal of life. He is laying down his most lasting approach to his whole environment. His goal, as we have seen, will always be a goal of superiority; and he will take his position towards every

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situation in the way in which he believes he can best save and secure his superiority. In doing this, he is determining the course of his life. Nothing outside him compels him to make these particular generalizations, to draw these particular conclusions; he determines himself. From the moment his style of life is constructed, he no longer possesses freedom of decision. Now he can only live in accordance with the conclusions he has drawn. The way he has trained himself to approach life will always influence him. If it were possible for him to change his actions without changing his goal, he would feel that he had abandoned everything he had learned from life and was placing himself in imminent danger of complete defeat.

The child's style of life, however, was not arrived at by any process of logical or mathematical thinking. It was the result of guesses and groping. On the basis of the experiences offered by his environment or provoked from it, it was his task to find out how to live; and he did it mainly by his feelings; by remembering satisfactions and dissatisfactions, by picking up hints from those he saw around him, by experiments which turned out well or ill. If his conclusions appear wrong to us, we must remember that when he made them they appeared to him the best he could make.

Almost every human being, in building up his style of life, makes too low an estimate of his own possibilities. We must inquire, therefore, into the reasons for the inferiority feelings and the ways in which they can be compensated. Inferiority feelings themselves are nothing abnormal. They imply only that we are not satisfied with the position in which we find ourselves and that we wish to change it. Every action which we contemplate to-morrow is founded on a feeling of dissatisfaction with our position to-day. If a man determines

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to buy a new coat he must somehow feel inferior in his old one. The motives for such a feeling vary. His coat may be old and shabby. It may be quite serviceable but out of fashion. He may think that the cut or colour is unbecoming to him. Perhaps he has seen a friend wearing a better coat and he envies him. Any of these circumstances may give rise to a feeling of inferiority; it would depend on the individual's style of life which of them gives a strong enough motive for him to do something about it. In the particular motive which leads to a change of the situation we shall be able to see the degree of common sense involved in the individual's style of life. If it is his goal to be the best-dressed man in the world, an extraordinarily slight circumstance might be sufficient to provoke a very strong feeling of inferiority. Sometimes this feeling of inferiority is so disproportionately strong that a man will commit a theft or a woman take to prostitution for the sake of clothes. In the judgment of such individuals, only clothes can assure their superiority and everything else is subordinate.

There are many occasions which provoke inferiority feelings; but not all men draw the same conclusions. Everything which has ever happened to an individual *can* be made into a cause for inferiority feelings. Nothing in the world *must necessarily* be a cause for them. The circumstances in which an individual feels inferior will be bound up with his style of life and his goal. Everything makes him feel inferior which offers opposition to the attainment of his goal. When we have fixed our style of life and our outlook on the world, it is no longer the situation itself which is important, but the situation as we interpret it—as we judge it favourable or unfavourable for securing our ends. So if a man, facing a task, judges it to be too difficult for him, he will never be able to fulfill

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it properly, however easy it may be in fact. If, on the other hand, he faces the task with the confidence that he can prove adequate to it, he will not give up his efforts till he has found the way to accomplish it. If, for example, a woman thinks that to marry and bear children is too difficult a task for her, she will arrange her whole life so that she can avoid meeting it. If she faces marriage and parenthood happily and with confidence, she will prepare herself for such activities and will undoubtedly find a way to approximate to her ideal.

Courageous individuals will establish their goal within the bounds of reality. Because their goal is objective, it will be one which they can attain if they use the right method and prepare themselves adequately. In consequence, they will not give up hope when they meet the first difficulty; and if one method proves insufficient they will look around for a new one. But where the goal is on the useless side of life and beyond the bounds of reality, this fluidity of means no longer holds. An individual with such a goal will make a fixed point of it and every deviation will be felt as a severe defeat. Such fixed goals are always neurotic; they are impossible to attain, yet every departure from them produces grave feelings of inferiority. The man who has made it his goal to be the Morally Best, the Most Famous, the Most Highly Educated, the Most Powerful, the Greatest Criminal, or even the Unhappiest, has condemned himself to a career of failure. There is always the possibility that someone may excel him along his own line; and if any individual goes one better than himself, he is bound to feel completely defeated.

Where the goal is objective and useful, the individual will be satisfied with every step forward. He will give his whole responsibility to the task; he will always keep his hope and



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courage; and if his technique proves inadequate, he will find a way to improve it. The "Now or Never" attitude of the neurotic finds another expression in the motto, "All or Nothing." Success must be not only immediate but absolute. No such absolute success is known on this planet; the neurotic is thus driven by his own style of life to dissatisfaction and despair. With a more normal individual a delay in achieving his goal or a deviation from it will not stir up feelings of absolute defeat; he will make, instead, a stronger effort. He will look for mistakes and try to correct them. But where the whole goal is mistaken, it is not so easy to confess mistakes of method. In looking for mistakes, a neurotic might find that his whole approach to life had been at fault. He might see that he was altogether wrong; and his prestige would suffer a disastrous blow. Neurotics, therefore, will always accuse external influences for their failures. They will believe and attempt to persuade others that they are the victims of fate, heredity, or the malignity of their fellow-men. In especial, they will feel free from blame if they avoid making decisions at all; it will then seem obvious to them that whatever happens is forced on them from outside. They do not understand—if they are to continue their style of life it is imperative that they should not understand—that an individual is responsible for the results not only of his decisions but equally of his indecisions.

Not all who profess willingness to recognize their responsibility are really prepared to learn from their mistakes and avoid them in the future. There are some who will quite happily accuse themselves of their faults in order to anticipate the reproach of others. This is the means they choose to save their superiority. It is their goal to be their own worst enemy and to know it better than anyone else. It can easily be seen that by reproaching themselves they are, in fact, trying to

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evade responsibility. They confess their weaknesses and failures and they use them as arguments that they should in no circumstances be forced to succeed better. Remorse, Nietzsche remarked, is indecent. Recognition of mistakes should have only one consequence—an improvement of technique.

## CHAPTER III

### *Inferiority Feelings*

EVERY man alive has inferiority feelings. It is immaterial whether he has many feelings of inferiority or few. It is immaterial whether they are justified or not. All that matters is what he does with them. Some men use them as a reason to limit themselves, to hesitate and fail. Others use them as a stimulus to go farther ahead. For many people life would be immeasurably happier if, instead of saying "Difficulties hold me back: this fact or that prevents me from succeeding," they could learn to say "In spite of the difficulties I shall go ahead." Once more we see that it is never the situation which provides the barrier to success, but only the interpretation the individual gives it. "Yes, but . . ." says the discouraged individual. "In spite of . . ." says the courageous individual.

There are two great groups of facts with which a child is faced from the beginning of his life; and each group can offer an opportunity for the development of inferiority feelings. The first group includes all the influences situated within his body, the second all the influences situated outside himself, in his environment. The formation of his character will reflect the way he has responded to these influences and how he has built up a style of life to meet them. He is not playing a passive part. He acts as well as reacts. He opens himself to some influences, he avoids others, and others still he provokes into activity. Every personality is a coherent attempt to manage experience.

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A new-born child experiences his body and his organs from the moment of birth. There are satisfactions and dissatisfactions. There are influences he has not yet learned to master. He may be helped by his environment to control his functions or he may be hindered by it. Even if he were born with a completely healthy body, it is by no means certain that he would not suffer from organic difficulties. Exposure, bad feeding, ignorance and lack of care may all overburden his body and make it artificially inferior. But there is no such thing as a perfect body: every child is born with a greater or less degree of organic imperfection.

The child who suffers from severe bodily defects, who is delicate and weak or liable to disease, is unfavourably placed. Unless we know how to avoid it, his interest will be distracted from his environment and centred on his own discomforts and irritations. It is his own body, his own person, that will take up his attention. We must add to this, also, that such children need an increased care on the part of their parents; and if they are not trained at the same time to do everything they can for themselves they may come to expect attention and support from others; they may increase their dependence in order that they may always have someone to look after them.

Even with an organic inferiority, however, we are not faced with a situation which *compels* an unfortunate development. The history of mankind is full of instances of individuals whose organic imperfections represented to them a challenge to greater effort and greater success. It is not for nothing that so many geniuses suffered from bad health or from physical disabilities. They trained themselves to succeed *in spite of* their difficulties; and in consequence they went much further than others who were endowed with more normal physique.

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The effect of an organic imperfection depends on the child's attitude towards it. It is certainly a handicap; but many a man trains to beat his own handicap and in so doing acquires unusual skill and ability. If we point out that many of the failures in life are derived from those children who suffered from organic inferiorities we do not mean to set up another excuse for failure. We mean to draw attention to the dangers in the situation so that they may be avoided. The chief danger lies in the attitude of the child.

The child with an organic imperfection, as he develops, cannot avoid comparing himself with other children and with the adults around him. He sees that in certain activities he has more difficulties than others and in consequence he experiences the feeling of inferiority. Perhaps he knows nothing of his actual organic handicap—he sees only that his efforts do not bring him to an equality with others. Sometimes his striving for compensation will be successful: he felt clumsy, let us suppose, in comparison with other people; he gave much attention to increasing his adroitness and in the end he has not only overcome his inferiority but he is unusually skilful. Sometimes he dares not struggle for fear of defeat: he resigns himself to his inferiority and looks elsewhere for the feeling of superiority. It may be that he feels singular, different from others; and because he cannot join in their pleasures and activities he feels excluded. For many people this feeling of being excluded is a great torment. The lower they estimate their own worth and capacity, the less they can bear not to be noticed and made much of.

In his personality ideal an individual pictures not only what he wants to be but also what he wishes he could look like. If a child is tall for his age or small for his age, dark or fair, thin or fat, and if his looks do not agree with his person-

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ality ideal, there is another fruitful ground for inferiority feelings. And we may notice here that personal appearance often plays a greater part in the development of a girl than of a boy. Her looks are more apt to be commented on. A woman is still often expected to make her way by her personal appearance: her face is her fortune—or her misfortune. We can easily understand a child who suffers from feelings of inferiority because there are other children more attractive to look at than he is. The handicap is not unconquerable. There are few faces which cannot be improved so as to pass in a crowd; and even downright ugliness does not prevent a successful approach to the problems of living. Men of genius have often been none too handsome; and need we say anything of women of genius? It is a little more difficult to see, perhaps, that beauty may be as great a handicap as ugliness. A lovely child is almost invariably more spoilt than others. Everyone notices him more, everyone is kinder to him. Even children like to choose good-looking friends. In consequence, a lovely child often becomes vain and self-centred, interested in his own person in much the same way as a child with an organic imperfection. He comes to believe that his looks entitle him to special consideration. He is satisfied to depend on his looks for success and he limits his own training to acquire skill in dealing with the problems of life.

In our present culture we may almost call it an organic imperfection to be born a woman; and it is certain that many men and women value it in this way. It is very much the same as with left-handedness. To be left-handed is not in itself an organic imperfection, but our culture is right-handed; and though thirty-five per cent of children are born left-handed, left-handedness is "odd." Left-handed children are therefore generally trained to develop their right hands and

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at first they are more awkward than the naturally right-handed children. A condition which, considered physiologically, is no handicap at all has thus become, through cultural demands, an organic imperfection. So to be a woman in a "masculine" culture may be considered an "inferiority situated in the body." Most girls have none too pleasant an experience of the value given to their own sex; and they can easily derive from their experiences a pessimistic view of their own possibilities. On the other hand, many boys are burdened by the overestimation of masculinity. They feel that more exacting demands are made of a man and they try to live up to the expectations that others seem to have of them. The slightest disappointment or reverse will make them increase their efforts to appear "strong" and "manly"; but behind this attempt to put up a good show is the haunting fear that they are inadequate to the masculine rôle. Overestimating masculinity, they will despise girls; and thus they will contribute their part to the dislike of girls for their own position.

Besides the organic conditions, outside circumstances are exercising an influence; and here two groups of children have difficulties in adjusting themselves to life. These are the children who were pampered and those who were neglected in their early years. Children who were neglected are perhaps rarer than we might imagine; but pampered children are a disastrously large number of mankind. Every baby needs care and attention from his mother. He could not survive without them. If this care is given unconditionally, however, the child will feel himself entitled to it as a right. The close contact between a child and his mother is a great security for the child. It can also be a source of great inferiority feelings. When he is forced to make independent steps, he may consider himself endangered and neglected. So far his mother has shielded him

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against responsibility. Now he feels abandoned to his own efforts. This insecurity itself will create a feeling of dependence ; and every feeling of dependence is accompanied by a feeling of oppression. A child whose mother has pampered him is not prepared to act by himself. His mother found it easier to remove difficulties from his way than to train him to overcome them by himself.

And indeed if a pampered child tries to meet situations by himself, ten to one he will fail. He is not prepared. He is not trained. He flies back to his mother and tries to engage her help. If such occasions are repeated, he becomes discouraged. He concludes that he is less capable than others and that he must always find someone to protect him. He will conceive that everything strange is hostile and he will try always to have someone to bear the brunt of life for him. At first the mother is the "extended arm" of the child: she does for him what he cannot do for himself. Many children try to use their mothers as their "extended arm" all through their lives.

We are not saying that mothers should avoid being tender with their children. Far from it—a mother's tenderness is the child's first experience of social feeling. It gives him his first trust in his environment, his first knowledge of good will and friendliness. It is the best means we possess for training a child to increase his circle of interest, to make contacts with other people, to contribute to the happiness of others. Tenderness given with common sense can encourage a child in all his activities. But tenderness misapplied, tenderness given for no reason, tenderness that is a mere self-indulgence, may provide an influence that ruins the development of a child's character and damages his whole future.

In the outcome it is no better whether an individual fails because others were too anxious to remove difficulties from



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his path or because there was no one interested in teaching him to overcome difficulties. The neglected child had no opportunities to learn to face problems in a successful way. He had no opportunities to develop social feeling. He had no experiences which showed him what social feeling was. How could he be interested in others? No one showed him the way. How could he put the pleasure of others above his own pleasure? He never saw it done. Life is a fight for him; and he, too, will look on others as if they were his enemies.

Orphans brought up in a home where too many children are given in charge of one poor overburdened nurse will often fight desperately for each little attention they might secure. Even foster children or adopted children are sometimes in this position. Often they are illegitimate children or they have come from homes where there was no happy family life. Their foster parents feel that they have taken on a great responsibility and will try to correct the "curse of heredity." They will be inclined to interpret the slightest deviation from the behaviour of a model child as an unwelcome sign of the child's tainted parentage or environment. They are inclined, therefore, to be too severe with these children or, at least, too pessimistic about them. If they have children of their own, there may really be a difference in their attitude towards these foster children. There may be favouritism, or they may feel superstitiously that they cannot be as good as a real mother and father to them, because the "mother instinct" or the "father instinct" is not there.

The situation is sometimes worse when the children know that they are foster children. The usual competition between all the children of a family will be increased. Children who feel overlooked often find a relief in imagining that they are not really the children of their parents but of people much

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grander and much more affectionate to them. This is true even when the parents are really their own. We hear these children accuse their parents of treating them like strangers, of not behaving to them as if they were their own children. It is often more stressed when the children are orphans or illegitimate or adopted children. Many of the children in orphan asylums dream that they are the sons and daughters of noblemen or of kings and queens and that some day they will be acknowledged. If an adopted child behaves in this way, the parents will become self-conscious and perhaps increase their strictness because of the "native ingratitude" of the child.

The fate of an illegitimate child is not always improved if he lives with his mother. The mother, disappointed in love and in her hopes for the future, regards the child as a living reproach and considers him as a handicap in her chances of a subsequent marriage. Even if she is right to think herself more handicapped, the child is surely not responsible. He will feel the difference of his situation and of her attitude, however, and it will help the development of inferiority feelings. Children of unhappy marriages are in much the same difficulties. Often they are a sort of buffer between the parents, an outlet for their bad temper. The mother accuses them of the vices of their father, the father accuses them of the evil nature of their mother. Sometimes the opposite happens; the parents compete who can spoil the child most; they angle for the child's sympathy and use it as a pawn in their warfare. How can a child develop a hopeful attitude for his own future, especially for his future in marriage, if he grows up in the atmosphere of marital quarrels and arguments? Similar to this type are the children who were unwanted or the girls whose parents were hoping for a boy. Even if they wanted a

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girl, parents are generally reconciled quite easily to a boy; but we very often see a girl who has suffered because her parents would have preferred a boy.

Sometimes we shall find children who act as if they were neglected when in fact their parents are very indulgent to them. A child who thinks he is put into the background is generally right. His parents do put him into the background. At the beginning, however, he was not right. He has found his way into a vicious circle. The child gets the idea that he is neglected. His mother criticizes him, perhaps; or another child in the family falls ill and is given special care. Feeling himself overlooked, he tries to attract attention. He cannot succeed by being good; for if the children are good, the mother is glad that they do not trouble her and she need not occupy herself with them too much. So the child finds out that being good is not very effective; it is much more effective to be bad. Now he gets all the attention he desires. He is blamed and criticized and scolded and punished. The other children are held up to him as an example. When he keeps on drawing attention to himself, he is really put back in his place. The other children are really liked better than he is, because they give less trouble. In the end his suspicions are confirmed and he thinks that he was perfectly right all the time.

It might appear that if pampering and neglecting were both so harmful, it would be better if one parent spoilt the children and the other equalized the situation by being severe. And we often observe that a father thinks it his duty to correct the indulgent attitude of the mother by being strict himself. In fact, of course, this is as big a mistake as any other. If the father is harsh, the child may become afraid of him and cling more closely still to the mother. He may consider that every-

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one in the world but his mother will prove harsh to him. Thus he will avoid as much as he can any contact with his father and the distance between the two will become greater every day. If the child happens to be a girl, she will conclude that all men are like her father. She feels that she must be afraid of them all.

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Child's Position in the Family*

OFTEN a child's position among his brothers and sisters influences his attitude so strongly that we can tell by looking at him or by hearing him talk exactly what his position was. The means he assumed in his struggle for recognition remain with him through his adult life. He keeps the same feelings of inferiority and he tries to get rid of them in the same way. Of course, where the family was a co-operative unit these differences would not be so marked; it is the competition of the children amongst themselves that stresses their position; and where there is competition each child finds the weapons appropriate to his situation.

Some positions are more striking than others. Anyone who has been trained to recognize these differences can generally make a pretty good guess whether an individual has been an oldest child, a second child, a youngest, or an only child. Of course, it is not the mere numerical order which leaves its effect on the character; it is the situation which the child was meeting. If, for example, the oldest child died, or if he were away from home a good deal in the first few years of life, the next child would have the characteristics of an oldest. Similarly, if the children of the family came in two groups, with a large gap of years between, the oldest of the second group would behave as an oldest and the youngest of the first group would behave as a youngest. We have seen that it is the first five years of life which are decisive in the formation

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of the character; and where the difference is more than five years it must be discounted. If there were two children in a family, with ten years' difference of age, they would *both*, from the psychological aspect, be only children.

There is nothing which points more impressively to the importance of the first few years of life than this persistence of character traits derived from the childhood situation. Already in childhood the sex of the children will be one of the factors in their position. It is not the mere fact of their sex which sets their situation. It is not their physiological processes. What makes their sex so influential in their development is the way in which they are treated as being boys or girls, the welcome they are given and the expectations made of them. One boy among girls, or one girl among boys, will experience this difference at its height; and, as we shall see, these two positions are not at all favourable for the development of a confident and courageous personality. The desires and hopes of the parents will also affect their attitude to the children. Many parents who have hoped for a son are deeply disappointed when a daughter is born. Some will try to conceal their disappointment; but a concealed disappointment remains a disappointment and their attitude will reflect their undervaluation of women. It happens comparatively often that such disappointed parents will bring up their daughter as nearly as possible like a boy. The girl may then feel a lifelong uncertainty about her rôle, and a lifelong desire to play the man's part. There is a well-observed account of this situation in *The Well of Loneliness*, by Miss Radclyffe Hall. The heroine of the story was expected, before her birth, to be a boy. She was brought up, not merely as a boy, but as a very much pampered only son, a prince in his own dominion. Where girls were so underrated, how could

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it ever appear desirable for her to enter into a marriage or to choose a love partner of the other sex? Such a spoilt child could never wish to accept the feminine rôle, a rôle she so definitely felt as secondary.

The *only child* is easy to understand. He is a pampered child. Almost every only child continues to be intimately and closely connected with his parents; and, if not with his parents, with others who will give him the same attention to which he has been accustomed. Often he will never find his way to meet the external world independently. He expects that others will be as indulgent to him as his parents were; and the disappointments that follow will seem to show him that people are hostile, that they do not recognize his unique importance. The atmosphere around him in his childhood was so warm that he does not like to put his face out of doors and meet the ordinary weather of the workaday world. His needs were always considered as imperatives; and he shrinks before the task of fulfilling his needs for himself. We must join to this the fact that, very probably, he has not had as much experience as children of larger families in meeting others whom he can consider as equals. He did not learn to work with others and to play with them; he did not learn the give-and-take of social life. In married life the only child will expect the same interest, the same attention from his partner, that he received from his parents; and he will expect it to be given without a return. In consequence, the marriages of only children are often a failure. In their professional life the mistakes of their attitude are not always so clearly revealed. The necessity to earn a living may appeal so strongly to them that they try to adjust themselves in this direction; and, if they have an appreciative audience, they may achieve quite considerable successes. Interestingly enough, only

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children often adjust themselves better in later life than oldest children or youngest children. The pampered child often knows the way to other people's hearts: he has had much practice in attracting sympathy.

The *oldest child* has always been, for some time, in the position of an only child. He will thus show in his later life some of the characteristics of the only child. But one fact makes his position a very special one and leaves its mark, deep and clear, on his development. He has lived through a tragedy. He has suffered a reversal of fortunes. Not many oldest children are well prepared by their parents for the arrival of a younger brother or sister. The child finds himself suddenly confronted with a new situation; and even if he knew he must expect *something*, he did not know what to expect. Now he must share the affection and interest of his mother with someone else. It seems to him that he has lost his rights and privileges. He had grown used to his mother's undivided attention and he feels lost without it. Often he will try to regain the kingdom of which he has been deprived; and we shall find him all through life trying to re-establish himself as the centre of attention. His early reverse may give him a deeply pessimistic attitude; and the weapons by which he tries to regain his old importance may show this pessimism. If the family life is not happy and co-operative we shall find this influence at its worst; and the life of the oldest child becomes the Tragedy of the Dethroned Prince.

Very often the oldest child, disappointed in his mother, turns towards his father and tries to make himself the father's favourite. Wherever we find an oldest child we may expect this attitude—a long-continued and mainly unrecognized grudge against his mother, and either an effort to call her to heel by reproaches and protests, or a search for a new ally in



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his father. This is one of the roots of the so-called *Œdipus Complex*; but in the view of Individual Psychology this complex is never originally connected with sex; it springs from a competition for attention. A more favourable side of the oldest child's development is often seen in his responsible and protective attitude to others; and indeed if, at the birth of younger children, he can be interested in their development and can take pleasure helping them, the dangers of the situation are almost completely avoided. Men of conservative attitude are most frequently oldest children. They have seen the advantages of preserving past situations unchanged; and they have not forgotten the lesson. This effect is made stronger where the custom of primogeniture persists, either legally or in social traditions. Oldest children have then a deep feeling for property and they will naturally object to any redistribution of power which alters the social order or leaves them without their privileges.

The *second child* finds the situation quite different. For one thing, he has never been the only child; there has always, from the day of his birth, been another child to divide the attention of the family. This other child, however, had a start over him; he was stronger, bigger and more experienced than he. He could talk better, walk faster, use his hands more skilfully. The second child, therefore, with his goal of superiority, is always trying to catch up. He has a pacemaker before him; and it is not sufficient for him to be able to run as fast, he must erect a margin of superiority, he must overtake him. The typical second child gives the appearance of being always in a hurry, of always having full steam up. If their ambition is put on the useful side of life, second children can be very successful; but we find them involved in a curious situation. They cannot bear to play a secondary rôle, but

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they must always have someone whom they conceive as superior to measure themselves against and to struggle to excel. In the competition between an oldest and a second child, it is the more courageous who will win the day. Sometimes the oldest child can keep his superiority and develop without restriction. Sometimes he finds himself outshone by the younger child and his pessimism is increased. If the second child loses hope of defeating the older child, he may seek a different battlefield where he has no competition. We may take as illustration two sisters: the older of the two was able to preserve her privileged position; she was pretty, charming and popular; the younger allowed her to carry off the palm in these respects; she paid no attention to her looks or to her social abilities, but became a blue-stocking and excelled in book learning. On the whole, in the competition between first and second children, the second is the more favourably placed. There is more stimulus to succeed, it is less of a disgrace to fail, and other people will probably take the side of the younger of the two. The second child feels that the future belongs to himself; the oldest child is apt to regret the glories of the past.

In the *youngest child* the ambition of the whole family is concentrated. He is the most petted and pampered of all the children and he continues to be the baby of the family. On the other hand, he is often expected to make good the failures of the other children. He is the genius by divine right, as we see in the fairy tales—the older children may have diminished some of their ambitions in order to meet the material difficulties of living; but by the time the youngest comes along the family is often much better situated economically and he is free to be ambitious without limits. Sometimes these youngest children provide us with the most startling examples

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of success. They strive to excel everyone who has gone before them. They may even accomplish an entire change of position, so that in the end they take charge of the whole family and govern it. The story of Joseph in the Old Testament is a beautifully described picture of such a youngest child. He was brought up as a youngest child—Benjamin came too far behind to make any difference to his character—and he became the chief success of the family and the provider for all the others. Many youngest children, however, while they keep their ambition, are afraid that they can never realize it: they become lazy and discouraged. They were too much spoiled and they expect to be supported by others for the rest of their lives.

The *middle child of three* is often in a difficult situation. He has a pacemaker in front of him and a rival catching him up from behind. If the difference in ages is small, he will feel strongly that he must outrun them both. With his younger brother or sister, of course, he no longer has the advantage of being helped and favoured by others. It takes much energy and courage for a child in this situation to avoid being overshadowed by either of the other children. He may acquire a fighting attitude, turn quarrelsome, or be extremely nervous. Where the family is large, groups will be formed amongst the children in accordance with age or sex; and in each of these groups we shall find one child who makes himself the leader and others who prefer to be led and protected. One child in each group will have the characteristics of an oldest, another of a second, and so on. Their position need not agree exactly with their relative ages. It may happen, for example, that the youngest child of such a group is stronger than the others and assumes leadership over them. In the same way a boy who is born after several girls may become the leader of all the

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children, or a girl who is born after several boys may take over responsibility for the whole household.

The *only boy among girls* has a specially privileged position. At least one of his parents generally makes him the favourite. The atmosphere of the home is almost always feminine. Women are in the majority and the boy will often feel powerless against such a feminine cabal. In spite of his unique position he feels inferior; and his feelings of inferiority will be strengthened if, as so often happens, his sisters combine to prevent him from taking too much advantage of his privileges. He will be overburdened by the expectations of the entire family. He is by no means necessarily doomed to failure. Many such children keep their position of overlord and are highly successful. More often, however, we shall find them as unhappy bachelors, with rather "effeminate" tastes, enjoying the care and attention of their mothers and sisters and not daring to lose their position by undertaking the responsibility of founding a family of their own. It will easily be understood that the girls in such a family, where so much importance is attributed to the one boy, are not likely to have a high esteem for womanhood and for the capacities of women.

The *only girl among boys* is just as badly off; perhaps still worse off. Even if she is the pet and favourite of her brothers and her parents, she will probably feel that she is not considered seriously enough. She will be kept in dependence by all of them; and often her brothers will combine to tease her. From their point of view the teasing will seem good-natured; but from her point of view it will call renewed attention to her difference from others and her powerlessness to make others treat her as an equal. She will grow up with a great fear of men and an overestimation of their powers. There

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are two directions she may take. If she fights back, she will attempt to show that she can be wilder and more boyish than any of her brothers. Otherwise she may become weak and resigned, always feeling that her own efforts have no effect on her situation.

## CHAPTER V

### *The Three Problems of Life*

THE many differing conceptions of what constitutes adequacy, security and superiority to life's difficulties mould the many differing characters and personalities which we find. We have seen that some personalities involve grave mistakes. One individual feels that he secures himself best by trying to browbeat his fellows; another feels that he is safest if he is an invalid, or if he avoids responsibilities; a third feels that he would be free from difficulties if only he were more "masculine." These conceptions all lead to activities on the useless side of life; and none of them really meets the situation, really improves the individual's position in the world. We should be able to discover a better approach by considering, in the light of common sense, what are the actual difficulties and problems which face every human being alive on this planet.

To the Individual Psychologist it seems clear that we can distinguish three problems or groups of problems; that if these three problems are met courageously, with proper training and a sensible technique, a happy and fruitful life is assured; that it is possible for all men, excluding those who are definitely feeble-minded, to make a good shot at solving them; and that all other problems either fall in fact under these three headings or are spurious difficulties, mere verbalisms or useless phantasies, which are not worth a moment's concern.

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If a man should spend his life regretting that he could not fly to the moon he would obviously be involved in a false problem. It could become a real problem only if there were some social advantage to be gained from flying to the moon and he were engaged in perfecting a technique to reach his end. In these circumstances the problem would fall under the second heading we shall mention below. This may seem an extreme example; but there are quite a number of people who concern themselves with equally false problems—such as “How can I make other people admit my sufferings?” or “How can I forgive myself for my mistakes?”

The first problem is the problem of social adjustment. Under this heading a whole aspect of life is included—matters of friendship, social standing, ability to understand others and be understood by them, manners, politics, culture,—all enter into the problem of society. Even the attention an individual gives to his personal appearance shows to some extent what position he has taken with regard to this problem; whether he wishes to be accepted by others or does not care what impression he makes. For a solution of this problem a high degree of social interest is necessary. The potentiality for social interest is no doubt inborn; but social interest must be trained and developed. It is one of the greatest tasks of a mother to draw out and encourage her children's feeling of interest in others. A quite small child will show distinctly in his actions how far his social interest is being developed. If he chooses to play by himself, we can see that he is not very much interested in others. If he plays only with older children, we can see again a limitation of his social interest—it is curtailed by his ambition to appear older than he is, or by his feeling that he needs to be protected from his equals. If he plays only with younger children, he is trying to find an easy

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way to be a leader or boss. If he plays only with his mother or adult friends of the family, his lack of courage and his feeling of dependence are very evident.

Some children will take the toys of other children as if they belonged to themselves, yet never think of sharing their own. If their social interest is not increased, they will behave in the same way in adult life: they will always expect others to do something for them without making any return themselves; and the result, of course, will be that they isolate themselves more and more from the sympathy and friendship of others. The child who is shy and hides from company grows into the adult who suffers from embarrassment and restricts his possibilities through a quite needless fear of the opinion of his fellows. The child who is always standing in the front row and making sure that he will be observed will again suffer in adult life from his lack of social interest. His goal of superiority is "to be noticed more than others"; but such a style of life by no means lessens the difficulties of social intercourse. These mistakes can be easily corrected in childhood; but for the most part they are overlooked by adults or they are thought quaint and amusing childhood traits. When they have become definitely interwoven with the style of life, correction is not so simple; and many people go through a great deal of needless misery and misfortune before they learn that only a style of life grounded in social interest will successfully meet the problem of intercourse with our fellow-men.

The second problem is the problem of occupation; and this heading also includes a whole aspect of life. It is not only the problem of economics and livelihood; though it is surprising to see how many people go through life hoping that they can avoid facing this side of the problem in a common-



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sense way. The whole sphere of vocational guidance falls under this heading; and the activities of leisure are as important as the activities in work. Once again if we watch a small child in his work and his play we shall be able to gain a clear insight into the growth of his interests and his fundamental training to meet the problem of occupation. We can see the degree of his courage and his interest in others in the games he plays and in the way he plays them. Some children take no delight in play unless their achievements are being watched and praised. They will have a hard time in later life. The appreciation they can get from a too affectionate mother will never be equalled when they are adults; but they will always feel the lack of it. Unless a child is interested objectively in the tasks he undertakes or the games he plays, his preparation for the future will be gravely deficient.

The first bridge between the home life and the future problem of occupation is provided by the school. There are children who find it very difficult to adapt themselves to school life. When they first go to school they show nervous symptoms; they are not interested in what takes place around them; they cannot learn, since they cannot listen. All these symptoms are rooted in the family life of the child before he went to school. If a child has hitherto lived isolated, dependent on his mother, how can he like this new experience? He is out of his bearings. He is no longer the unique centre of attention. The pampered child often displays his lack of preparation for meeting the problems of life from the moment of going to school. Indeed, many neurotics will admit, without seeing the relevance of their admission, that their unhappiness began with their school days. A neglected child is as badly placed, since he has been isolated by circumstances. His degree of

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social interest is small, because there was no one for him to be interested in.

Some children who are badly prepared for life do not show their failures so early. They are carried through their school days by their ambition and they are still able to win appreciation for their triumphs, either by reporting them at home or by engaging the favouritism of their teachers. At high school or college, or when they are confronted sternly by the problem of occupation, they begin to reveal their maladjustment. Generally their breakdown is attributed to physical conditions or social circumstances; and the mere fact of puberty is often taken to be a sufficient explanation. In a later chapter we shall see, however, that this boggy of puberty cannot have, in itself, any such effects. Adolescence provides no special crisis, except that the problems of life are meeting the child more directly at this period. He is faced with the prospect of looking after himself instead of being guided and supported by others; and the prospect may alarm him and reveal his faulty preparation.

The choice of an occupation in adult life is never wholly accidental and never wholly compelled by economic pressure. Interest, predilection and early training all play their part. Often we can see a very simple and straightforward line leading from the interests of a child to his occupation in later life. We shall consider this subject more fully in a subsequent chapter and at present give only a single example. A woman of thirty, who is one of the leading dress designers and authorities on fashion, remembers that she was often punished in her childhood for playing with cloth and scissors. Whenever she could get hold of a piece of material, she would cut it up and arrange it; and no punishment could make her stop. It is not always that we can see so clearly the persistence of a childhood interest; but an analysis of childhood circumstances

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will always reveal tendencies which influenced the choice of profession in adult life.

The third problem is the problem of love and the relation with the other sex. The adult attitude towards this problem also is prepared in childhood. It will be influenced by the child's experience of his parents' marriage, by the way in which the two sexes were treated and valued in his environment, and by his own attitude and approach to children of the other sex. If he plays only with children of his own sex we can gather that he is afraid of members of the other sex or that he despises them. His choice of a partner in adult life will be influenced by his feelings of inferiority or superiority towards members of the other sex, and we shall see in it, also, his estimation of the sex to which he belongs and of his own adequacy to his sexual rôle. If he chooses a partner who is obviously stronger or weaker than he; if he changes the object of his love; if he believes in free relations and avoids marriage; if he refuses any approach to the other sex at all; we shall observe in all these expressions a faulty preparation for the solution of this problem.

These three problems comprise all the difficulties with which a human being is confronted. The personality is the means by which an individual attempts to solve them or to get around them. They face everyone, and everyone must return some answer to them. His actual style of life is his answer. He cannot in fact evade them, even if he makes it his aim to evade them; for if he tries to live without solving them, he is really demanding that others should solve them for him. They confront him in any case; and an attempt to put the responsibility on someone else only results in a personality which is ill-trained and inadequate in meeting the problems of life. The only way for an individual to improve his situa-

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tion is to approach these three problems courageously, with the conviction that they can be solved, and to seek a method of solution which is consonant with an interest in others and in the welfare of others.



## *Part Two*



## CHAPTER I

### *The Female Child*

IF we are right, the physiological differences of sex play no direct part in the development of character. In its main lines the character of the adult is formed during his first four or five years of life; and even the most hardened seeker for physiological explanations can hardly assert that sexual differences are as pronounced in those years as they become later. The glands whose functions are most important in early childhood are the thyroid and the thymus and the structure and activity of these glands is the same in boys and girls. The sexual glands begin to exert their full influence only with the coming of puberty; but by this time the individual has already taken his fundamental position towards life, towards the other sex and towards his own future. It is thus extremely difficult for those who see inborn differences in the attitude of the two sexes to support their point of view; and they are generally driven to admit that education and environment may stress or diminish the differences. By this admission they have weakened their whole argument. We, from our standpoint, rigorously deny that any character trait is inborn in the way we find it expressed in later life; but we have no great quarrel with those who suppose that the potentiality for such a development was present from the beginning. Everything and nothing is inborn. The material with which an individual starts is so much altered, developed and refashioned by culture and tradition, by his experiences and his interpretation of



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experiences, by his interests and the way they are met and encouraged by others, by his aims and the success or failure which follows them that it would be perfectly impossible to disentangle in adult life any element of his character which could be attributed to native or hereditary endowment.

Yet we are certainly faced, very early in life, with a difference in development between girls and boys; and if we see no reason to believe that this difference is inborn or hereditary we must find a sufficient explanation for it on other grounds. How does a girl come to develop these supposedly "feminine" traits of character? How is it, if no difference is present in the beginning, that in the end we find a notable divergence in the psychology of men and women? It is true that men and women are by no means so different as they are generally assumed to be. It is true, also, that a woman may be "masculine" in character and a man may be "feminine." But why do we find any difference at all?

Those who believe in native differences often take support from the fact that women's achievements are still, on the whole, less outstanding than the achievements of men. Their argument runs: "We are living in an age where equal opportunities are given to men and women. Girls are brought up under the same conditions as boys. They are given the same educational advantages. They may make their own livings, they may follow their own interests, the legal disadvantages of being a woman have been redressed. And *still* they accomplish less than men. They are *still* unable to prove their equality." This argument really presents us with our answer. It draws our attention to the whole problem and difficulty. Once for all we must insist and demonstrate that the conditions of life are not the same for a girl and for a boy.

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Let us look at the world into which the baby girl comes. Let us see the estimation which is put upon her. Let us notice, first of all, what are generally supposed—still generally supposed—to be “masculine” qualities and “feminine” qualities. In this world she enters everything active is called masculine, everything passive is called feminine. The virtues of masculinity are supposed to be courage, firmness, initiative, logical thinking, farsightedness. The virtues of femininity are supposed to be charm, tenderness, patience, intuition, delicacy. The vices of masculinity are supposed to be roughness, inconsiderateness, lack of fine perception. The vices of femininity are a longer list; women are supposed to be illogical, inconsequential, vain, over-emotional, without initiative, given to gossiping, too sensitive to pain, deceitful and cowardly. Even the masculine vices, however, are regarded as springing from the fact that a man is too active and too busy to bother himself with the lesser graces; and on the whole, when we say masculine we mean it as praise; when we say feminine we mean it as blame. To call a man a masculine type is a great compliment. To call a woman a feminine type implies a certain degree of criticism. The distinction in valuation, however, comes out more clearly when we apply the words to members of the other sex. If a man is called feminine, he can hardly draw much comfort from the description. If a woman is called masculine, she feels at least that she is being given credit for energy and efficiency. It is conceivable that we could call a woman “just as good as a man”; but what man would like to be called “just as good as a woman”? For a girl to be a tomboy is quite attractive. For a boy to be a “sissie” is deplorable.

The most organized form of such a valuation is found in the work of Otto Weininger. In his famous book on *Sex and*

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*Character* he elaborated the view that every individual is composed of certain manly elements and certain womanly elements. The prevalence of M or W, as he called these elements, made him develop into a masculine or a feminine type. In consequence we got men who were like women and women who were like men. But Weininger was not a good friend to the female sex; and in consequence he attributed every quality he thought really admirable to men and everything disgraceful, or at least everything left over after men had taken the best, to women. His book had a very great influence in crystallizing the common attitude to masculinity and femininity.

Even Jung, the famous analytical psychologist, takes the same view in a milder form. His essay "Women in Europe," describes men as level-headed, energetic and creative and denies these virtues to women. His prejudice is shown still more clearly when he states that it would be as unsatisfactory for a woman to hold the job of a man as for a man to be a kindergarten teacher or a nurse for children. He excludes American women from his criticism, partly through lack of familiarity with them, partly because the conditions of life in America are not quite the same as those in Europe, partly, perhaps, through an intelligible desire not to diminish his audience. But I myself, after having spent some time in the United States, am not able to see any great distinction between feminine psychology here and in Europe. In some respects the position of women has improved in the United States; in others, the European woman seems to have the advantage. The cultural traditions of the two continents remain very much the same.

Thus on her entrance into the world a baby girl is faced with a different valuation of the two sexes, and on the whole

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it is masculinity which is preferred. It is extremely rare to find a married couple who would not, in their hearts, be more pleased to have sons than daughters. It is a preference, indeed, which in our conditions would be difficult to avoid—if boys are given more opportunities, if they are expected to amount to more than girls, it is natural enough to prefer them. We are not dealing with ideals here. There are very many young couples who feel that they should have no preference. But the stubborn fact remains that for the most part parents who have daughters decide to reconcile themselves to the position and like it as well as if they had been given their first choice. And where such a couple professes beforehand to wish to have sons and daughters equally, if we ask them which the *first* child should be, they will generally reply, "A boy."

Similarly it is still regarded as rather a misfortune, if not slightly a disgrace, to have a family of four or five daughters and no sons. One prominent American, with a family of five daughters, all of them between fifteen and twenty-five, denied very strenuously that men were preferred to women or that they had more opportunities in life. Since he could not be convinced the subject was dropped and the conversation turned to other things. Some time later he remarked that he was wondering what to do with his daughters now they were growing up. "Would you have quite the same bother if they were boys?" he was asked. He thought a few moments and answered, "No, I suppose not."

So, when a young mother presents her new-born baby to the visitors, everything is well if it is a boy; she can be as proud as she likes and there is no strain in the situation. But if it is *only* a girl, she must be a little more heroic, a little more effusive, perhaps, in her joy. And it is not beyond possibility that one of the more tactless visitors will console her with the

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remark that after all girls are nicer than boys, and, besides, she will perhaps have a boy next time. Just think. "Only a girl" or "Only a woman" would now often excite protests; but is it conceivable that anyone should say "Only a boy" or "Only a man"?

Often a mother, to show that she is *not* disappointed, will be still more tender and affectionate to a baby girl. This tenderness, however, only makes the situation worse. The mother tries to over-compensate the wrong she has done to the baby in her thoughts. She increases her devotion and attachment to the child and in this way makes the child more dependent upon her. She treats her as a baby as long as she can and the girl's inferiority feelings are so much the more heightened. A pampered child cannot help feeling inferior; he is unable to look after himself and he is bound to believe that others are more capable than he is. The sign of an inferiority complex is not that the individual confesses that he feels small; he may be quite boastful or aggressive; but before certain situations which other people can meet he feels, "This is too much to demand from me," and he either tries to avoid the problem altogether or to get somebody else to solve it for him. It is one of the plainest signs of the low estimation in which women are held that girls are oftener pampered and petted than boys.

If a girl is the only child in the family she will notice this difference in attitude comparatively late. She will see it when she comes in contact with other children at the age of two or three. If there are boys in the family already she will find the difference immediately. She is treated as a pet. Less is demanded of her, more is given her. She comes very early to understand the value of affection and to see how she can ingratiate herself by kisses and caresses, by snuggling and

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nestling. She learns the advantages of dependence—it is easier for a child if the adults do everything for her. As her mother, in all probability, has an attitude of resignation to her feminine rôle, she teaches the child the so-called “feminine traits”—to be vain and make much of her appearance, to be sensitive and touchy, to be dependent and fearful. A little girl’s looks are almost always commented on and if she become vain it is no more than we might expect. If girls like to dress up and to gaze at themselves in mirrors there is no need to presume an inborn tendency.

On the other hand, the baby girl sees that boys act in a different way. They are trained to act differently. She may see with envious eyes that her brothers are allowed to play on the streets while she must keep at home. They climb on chairs, they make noises, they train their muscles, they play more exciting games. Even their toys are different. No one would think of giving a little girl tin soldiers or a drum. No one would think of giving a boy a toy kitchen or a sewing basket. The psychologists who assert that men and women choose different occupations through inborn predilections might well consider how subtly and constantly children are influenced by the expectations of their parents.

Sometimes the toys or the books usually given to the other sex become the ideal of a small boy or girl. If a boy is found playing with a doll, people will remark on it and say, “He might be a girl.” “Just like a boy,” they will say, when a girl plays with a model engine or a sword and trumpet. And indeed we can often discover the first signs of discontent with their own sex when children choose the games or playthings of the other sex. It happens at times that a boy, thinking that girls have an easier time than boys and not quite sure of his own masculinity, prefers to act like a girl; but far more

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frequently it is the other way around. Few boys like to read girls' stories. Many girls like to read books for boys. In this way, by taking on the attributes of the other sex, they feel they can perhaps change their own. It is much the same as when a child climbs up into the chair recently occupied by someone she admires and cries out, "Look! I'm Aunt Mildred now!"

It is especially if children are left in doubt about their own sex that they think it easy to change; and often the results remain with them through life. This change of sex enters sometimes into the dreams and phantasies of adult women. An example of this doubt is shown in the following case. To the great disappointment of the parents, after they had already had one girl, the second child was also a girl. They tried to compensate for this disappointment by bringing up the younger of the two as much like a boy as they could. She herself fell in with the atmosphere and very much wished that she had been a boy. She thought that if only she could wear the clothes of a boy she might turn into a boy and in consequence she begged and begged her parents for a boy's suit. They on their part made the mistake of promising always that she should have one for her next birthday, and each year put off the fulfilment of their promise till the next year. The girl waited for years for her dream to come true. Finally, she realized that it was not so easy to change her sex; but in the meantime she had trained and cultivated the striving to be a boy and the attitude of a boy. She felt the necessity to acknowledge herself a woman as a defeat and showed a great discontent with the feminine rôle. Now she is in her forties, still unmarried and to all intents and purposes leading the life of a man.

If boys wish to be girls it is generally a sign of temporary

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discouragement. They are brought up proud of being boys and it is only when they feel difficulties too much for them that they envy the fate of girls. But with girls it is different. If someone says to them, more or less as a joke, "I thought you were a boy," or "What a good boy you would have made," they take it as a compliment and cultivate a boyish behaviour in order to deserve it. Contrast with this the feelings of a boy who is told "You ought to have been a girl." No child could help noticing the difference. Is it surprising when girls take the other sex for their ideal, make themselves as masculine as possible, choose a masculine profession when they grow up, avoid marriage or marry and remain frigid and discontented?

Other girls, less active in their protest, less willing to fight for masculine privileges, will express their discontent by roundabout means. They will stress their weakness and femininity and attempt to dominate by being helpless, tender, soft and submissive. Their goal is still to get the better of men, to conquer, to be superior; but they have taken the path of the strategic retreat. No one is tougher, more selfish and obstinate than the weak and clinging woman who thrusts on others the responsibility for making her happy and fulfilling her aims.

Another influence on the attitude of girls is the position which their mother occupies in the family. Many women invest their husbands with authority because they feel incapable of making decisions themselves. It is not rare to find families where the mother never punishes her children herself but hands the task over to the father. Because of her low estimation of herself, she is afraid of losing the affection of her children. She wants to keep it all to herself. Perhaps, at the same time, she feels that women cannot control their



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children; a strong hand is needed and only a man possesses sufficient firmness. She will say to the children, "Wait till father comes home. He'll show you!" She may even try to dominate them by the threat of *telling father*. Of course she does not understand what she is doing; she is making a boggy of men and she is showing the children, boys and girls, that the woman who represents all women to them, the one woman with whom they are in close contact, thinks herself inferior to a man and cannot trust in her own judgment.

Where a woman has such an attitude she will be unable to conceal it. In one form or another it is bound to come out. A girl once asked her mother why there were three girls and no boys in the family. The mother answered, "Boys are so difficult to bring up. I would never have dared to have a boy." The girl drew from this answer the conclusion that girls had far less in them than boys and were not worth nearly so much attention. She is now in her thirties and a very attractive and beautiful woman; but she has never married—men are so hard to handle! In a similar instance, a mother told her daughter that she was physically too weak to have boys. This girl has married twice and divorced both her husbands; she is still childless.

The first step into the outside world is the kindergarten. If the teacher is not wise, a distinction may be made in the treatment of boys and girls. We are not suggesting that boys and girls should be educated in exactly the same way; but where there is a difference it should not admit of a difference of valuation between the two sexes. Otherwise, with the best intentions, the teacher may give the girls new provocations for inferiority feeling. Co-education is no panacea, and even under co-education unrecognized prejudices may show themselves. In one co-educational school, for example, a teacher

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wished to punish a boy and sent him to sit amongst the girls. The boy resented the humiliation very bitterly and reported it at home. But no one thought of the humiliation to the girls. There were twenty-five of them in the class and each of them was bound to form the impression that it was a punishment for a boy to be put on their level. They were bound to feel that it was only when a boy was to be punished that they were worthy of his society. The teacher—we are sorry to relate—was a woman. What can she have thought herself of the value of her own sex?

We can now understand the atmosphere in which a girl finds herself. From the moment of her birth she is treated, however subtly and delicately, with whatever compensations in the way of help and affection, as belonging to an inferior species. Even if we suppose that in adult life women have the same chances as men, the start has not been the same. It may be that there have never been such achievements among women as among men. It may be that most of the outstanding geniuses of the world have been men. But women have been curtailed, limited and discouraged from the beginning of their lives. They have had to contend against the inferiority feelings of all mankind and in addition there has been put upon them the burden of belonging to a sex which everyone—themselves included—considered as inferior. “Girls are not capable of this,” “women are not capable of that”—such were the signboards that they read around them on their journey through life. Need we be surprised if they accepted them as true and hindered their own development and progress? It should be clear that the blame for their shortcomings does not rest upon men. It rests upon themselves and on the cultural atmosphere in which they found themselves.

We have another way of tracing the signs of this inequality

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We may look into the memories of individual men and women. Of all the illimitable number of scenes and incidents that have fallen within our experience we keep a comparatively small selection in our minds. However trivial these memories may seem, we remember them because they have struck us; they have seemed significant and full of meaning. If we realize that every personality is a unity, we shall understand better what places this significance on apparently unimportant incidents. We remember what fits our style of life and reinforces it. A memory is a kind of representative picture. It says to us, "Such is the world, and such is your place in it."

It will be plain that the memories of early childhood have an especial importance. They show us the style of life in process of formation. In them we find the child's point of view as it begins to crystallize and take shape. They give us the incidents which he has chosen to regard as typical and which have provided a justification for his subsequent conduct. A child remembers, let us suppose, that he was punished by his father for something his brother had done. Older schools of psychology would have asserted that he remembered the incident because it had inflicted a wound on him from which he had never recovered. We, however, would interpret the facts quite differently: the child remembers it not because he was hurt; he has got over the hurt long ago; but because he needs the incident to remind him, "Such is the world. People are always punishing you for something you didn't do." He needs it to establish his goal of superiority. He is the blameless one, never responsible for the misfortunes he suffers.

Early memories thus afford us a good means of discovering how women regarded the fact that they were girls; what

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experiences they had and what conclusions they drew. Let us cite some examples; it will not be an accident that these women reveal in their memories a misconception of the feminine rôle and in later life suffered from inability to adjust themselves in the sexual sphere. A woman of twenty-eight, who revealed her resentment against marriage by always choosing an unsuitable partner, remembered that when she was a child her father beat her mother. The scene left such a vivid impression upon her that she described it as the first memory of all. Another woman, thirty-two years old, told the same story. She had been married seven years and had borne two children; but the marriage was not happy. She suffered from migraine whenever she had an argument with her husband, and she used her headaches to cut the argument short. An unmarried woman of thirty-five remembered that her father was asked by a friend in her presence why he had never had more than two children. The father did not notice that she was there and answered, as a joke, "As soon as I saw that the second child was a girl too, I stopped trying." The daughter did not quite understand what he meant; but she thought it was something very dreadful and showed that girls were a great nuisance in a family. Another unmarried woman remembered her father saying to her mother, again more or less as a joke, "You should thank God on your knees that I married you." The girl did not like the remark at all. Even when she grew up she still felt that men expected women to be grateful if they married them. She struggled very hard to show her independence of men and never give them a chance to feel that she was in their debt.

A woman of thirty, married but not contented, remembered that when the children went out for a walk her mother was proud of the boys and took them with her, but she herself was

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expected to walk behind with the nurse. The actual circumstances, of course, may not have been exactly as she remembered them; but in her psychological development it is not the facts that count but her view of the facts. Probably at the least her mother had teased her and left this misconstruction possible. A young woman who had been married barely six months found it impossible to get along with her husband. They were always having quarrels and it seemed to her that her husband was always trampling on her dignity. She recalled that in her childhood whenever she had a dispute with her brother she was compelled to give in, no matter how wrong he might have been. In her marriage she expected the same to happen, but she wished to protect herself against it. She therefore fought to gain the upper hand in time.

Another means of information lies open to us in childhood phantasies of future occupation. It is true that some girls picture themselves as married, with children of their own; but the majority find other prospects more desirable. They will wish to be film actresses, aviators, teachers or doctors. Even if they tell us that they are going to get married, we must sometimes understand it as an early sign of resignation. This is especially true if they say, "I want to marry a very rich man," or "I shall marry a famous writer." They do not dare to think that they could establish a future of their own.

Now we have our picture of the influences at work in the first ten or twelve years of a girl's life. There are many girls who grow up happily, with a bare minimum of discontent and disappointment with their own sex; but there are none who do not, sometime or other, run across the fact that it is no great advantage to be a girl. Some girls will accept the disadvantages of being a woman without great tension: they will see that these disadvantages are not humiliations

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or signs of their own inferiority but mistakes of our culture which can be remedied. These girls will keep their courage; they will look forward to a life of opportunities and interests in spite of the fact that they are members of the less-valued sex; and approaching life in this way they will discover that men can be comrades and friends. They will make happy marriages; they will feel equal to their partners and their partners will feel that they are equal. There will never be difficulties in their position which they cannot meet with confidence, friendliness and skill.

There are other girls who will feel slighted and forced to play the secondary rôle; and they will respond to the situation as they see it with all the qualities which are called "feminine" or with an attempt to prove themselves "masculine." We cannot justify them, but we can understand them. No matter what faults are displayed in our present culture, no matter what mistakes are made by parents or teachers, the child is not forced to reply with a mistaken attitude. The child's character will show the consequences of his environmental influences only in so far as he lets himself be influenced and finds it easier to be influenced than to use his own common sense. But if we cannot justify, neither can we blame. We can sympathize with the girl who finds it an advantage to stress her weakness and helplessness. We can sympathize with the girl who finds it better to protest and fight for recognition. And when we observe, as we can always observe, these traits of childhood persisting into adult life, we shall not be surprised or censorious. An individual always meets life with the weapons which he has found successful. His goal may have involved a mistake; he may have interpreted his experiences wrongly; but his weapons to attain his goal are always beyond criticism. When we come to discuss women

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in adult life, we shall meet all these girls again—active and passive, masculine and feminine, aggressive and submissive; and the story of each one of them will begin: “Even as a child. . . .”

## CHAPTER II

### *The Adolescent Girl*

IN adolescence a girl makes use of everything she has learned and practised and turns it to account in facing a new situation. There is no physical crisis in adolescence; it is a period of growth and development like any other. There are no revolutions of character; but the traits which have been established in early childhood are applied in rather different circumstances. Many people feel that adolescence is a great strain and trial; they are full of warnings about the dangers of adolescence and they feel that young people run terrible risks in these years. It is not true. A child who has been well prepared for adult life is in no special danger at puberty.

What is it, then, that has seemed to give justification to these fears? It is merely that the three problems of life are confronting the child more immediately; and if he has been badly prepared to meet them the faults in his style of life will reveal themselves more plainly. So far children have been guarded and protected by their parents. Now they must begin to think of a time when they are engaged in work, when they are making friends for themselves or finding that they cannot make friends, and when the problem of love will be right before them, demanding a solution. If they have been trained already for independence these problems will not seem to them too severe. They have already made friends of their own and they do not expect to find other people



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hostile. They have been interested in learning and the skill they have acquired has equipped them to go ahead in a useful occupation. They have been good comrades to members of the other sex and they do not look on them as enemies or strangers. But if they have been badly prepared, they do not see adult life as a time of increased opportunities but as a time of increased burdens. The worse they have been prepared, the more reason they have for fear. And many children begin to show the strain of their inferiority feelings in adolescence; face life as if they were in a panic, grow sulky and stop all progress or hit all around them as if they had their backs to the wall.

Adolescence is the examination on entrance into adult life. An examination is not a new situation but a test of previously acquired knowledge. It is only those who feel insufficiently prepared who suffer from stage fright before examinations; and so it is, too, with this entrance examination of adolescence. Those who feel confident because they are well prepared will go through adolescence without unusual difficulties. They will pass their examination and look forward with hope to the activities on which they are entering. But those who feel that life is too hard for them will do everything to avoid the test. They will hesitate and postpone the evil day when their deficiencies will be revealed. Some of them will perhaps muster up courage enough to undergo the test and hope to scrape through on their luck. For the time being, indeed, they may slip through and their success may help them to see their mistakes and prepare themselves better. More often it happens that those ill-prepared children who nevertheless, through favourable circumstances, go through adolescence without disaster, continue to expect that everything will come to them without effort. Their real test comes later in

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life, when they are actually involved in the problems of work and marriage.

As Doctor Alfred Adler has phrased it, adolescence is an invitation for young people to act and behave as if they were adults. If we look at it in this light we shall understand all the extravagances and exaggerations so common among adolescents. During this period children wish to be taken seriously, as grown-ups; and if they are at all doubtful themselves of their maturity they will overstress their claims. Thus we find children who during their adolescence demand freedom from all control and revolt against their parents and their teachers. Some of them take to drinking; it has been forbidden them and now they want to assert their liberty to do whatever they choose. This is their interpretation of what it means to be grown up. Others will think they owe it to their prestige to stay out late at night; and many will even seek after premature sex experiences, since it is sex experience, they think, that makes the difference between a child and an adult. We could multiply these mistakes indefinitely and we should find the same root to them all. They are the tricks of children who are pretending to be grown up; and some of them will remain children all their lives. Some, for example, will always run home to mother if anything goes wrong; they will never learn that independence and responsibility are two ways of looking at the same trait of character.

What we have said applies equally to boys and girls; and indeed the problems of life are the same for both sexes. The best attitude towards life is also the same for both sexes; and it is only the circumstances in which this attitude must be worked out that make the difference. The first of these special circumstances which a girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen must encounter is her own physical development.

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A girl who is well prepared will accept her physical development at puberty as a natural step towards her future. On the other hand, a girl of the active type who feels oppressed at home will watch impatiently for every sign of approaching womanhood. She will compare herself continually with girls who are ahead of her and whom she regards as luckier than herself. To believe herself grown up and independent she needs external proofs, such as the swelling of the breasts or the growth of hair; and when she notices the signs at last, she will probably be both proud and ashamed at the same time.

But a girl of a timid, discouraged and passive character will wish to remain her mother's baby as long as she can. She will be afraid of every physical development and will be suffused with embarrassment at every evidence of womanhood. Some such girls, indeed, look so intently the other way that they contrive not even to see their development. Others who will hate, consciously or unconsciously, every reminder that they are women are the girls who were bitterly discontented to be girls. It is mainly among such children, as we shall see later, that adolescence represents a time of physical strain and discomfort.

It is not only the development of the secondary sexual characters which plays an important part in adolescence; it is also the growth and development of the body as a whole. Sometimes children keep in their minds the thought that when they grow up they will approximate more to their personality ideal. They have a low opinion of their personal appearance and they hope that perhaps their looks will alter when they are as old, shall we say, as their older sisters. Now at last the testing time has come and they are no better off than before. Many of them will be sadly disappointed and

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the means they will use to overcome their inferiority will be very revealing. Indeed, at this time they may feel that they have taken a turn for the worse. Their bodies are growing and it is not invariable that the growth is harmonious. Some parts of the body develop while others remain childish. Their movements may be awkward in consequence; and if they are laughed at they may become more awkward still.

With girls who feel insecure on account of their personal appearance, there are two directions which may be taken. One group will refuse every aid that might make them more presentable and may even exaggerate their homeliness by careless dress and ugly gait or posture. They will explain, if they are recommended to take more care over their appearance, that they think it dishonest to try to deceive others. The other group goes to the other extreme. They will put on a great deal of make-up and dress extravagantly in the newest fashion. To some degree this is not only permissible but even advantageous. We can understand that they have more need of fashion magazines than women who have already "found their style," and their experiments, if they are not ridiculously wide of the mark or quite inappropriate to their economic position, can be the best method for finding out what styles really suit them. If they are denied this freedom at a time when people are inclined to excuse mistakes on the score of youth they may experiment in later life in circumstances in which they will expose themselves to laughter and perhaps contempt. Another reason why growing girls are often inclined to be extravagant, to paint their faces and to wear striking colours, is their protest against having been forced so long to wear the "serviceable" colours of the typical schoolgirl dress.

But there are some girls who adopt means which show

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the deepest discouragement in their attempt to make themselves more presentable. For the sake of finery a girl will sometimes go so far as to steal or to accept the attentions of an unscrupulous man; and from this point to prostitution is not a very long step. Both the girl who steals and the prostitute are suffering from an unusually low estimate of themselves. They are either children who have been badly pampered and expect everything to be given to them as a right, or they are neglected children who are thus taking their revenge on society. In either case, they feel deprived of privileges which they consider theirs. A girl who steals to buy clothes is not committing her first theft. In all case histories of such juvenile delinquents we discover that there were smaller thefts already from their mothers' pocket or purse. Even in childhood they felt themselves deprived. They thought that they could only gain friendship by buying it; and so we find them treating the other children in school to candies or buying flowers for the teacher with the money they have stolen.

The girl who sells her body for the sake of an easy life is at first hoping for a good time: it is generally later that she learns to regard it as a way—and to her it seems her only way—of making money. In her childhood she had already formed the opinion that the only asset a girl has is her body. Often she has been told that it is no good for a girl to learn and study; she should rather look out for a man to marry her. She has no great confidence in the future fate of a married woman and it does not occur to her that she could win the whole-hearted love of a marriage partner. She begins with love-making and for the moment she gains a thrill out of it. Her inferiority feelings are set at rest for the time being; she sees that she can attract a man and thus

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she gains a feeling of power. At the same time the low degree of her self-esteem is proved by the fact that she does not feel she can keep her attraction for a man; to experience her thrill of power she must make a fresh conquest on each occasion. Often these girls feel the mistake they have made; but their opinion that they could not make a living in any other way makes it difficult for them to turn back. They suffer from feelings of remorse, believe that no decent man could ever love them, and fall deeper and deeper into discouragement. That prostitution is really a rejection of the feminine rôle is clear when we consider that many prostitutes, in their private emotional life, are homosexual. That it is a depreciation of the other sex is equally clear. The prostitute puts herself into circumstances where she can feel, with some show of justification, that men are only animals and this is able to consolidate her style of life. There are few better examples of how any interpretation of life tends to produce its own verification.

We cannot point out too strongly that it is not the crisis of puberty that drives a girl to prostitution. Her attitude was already formed. In every case we could find in the details of childhood the experiences and the points of view which made it easy for the girl to turn towards prostitution in her adolescence. In many cases we should find also procacious sexual experiences and "shocks"; but as we have noted it is not the experiences but the way they are taken which decides future conduct.

At the other extreme will be the girls who care nothing for their looks and seem to wish to be sluts. Very often these girls have resigned themselves early to their fate; there was a prettier sister in the family and they thought they could never equal her. In any event we may suspect that every such

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girl has such a high personality ideal that she has lost all hope of reaching it. In early memories we can often see the motives for such behaviour. A woman who never used any kind of make-up remembered going for a walk with the whole family. As they came into the street from the front garden, her father looked at her mother and saw that she had powdered her face. "Come back inside," he said. When they were indoors he rubbed the powder from his wife's face with his handkerchief. This woman is now at an age when she has grown-up daughters. She has never used cosmetics herself and she quarrels with her daughters whenever she sees that they have used them. As we might expect, the daughters go to the other extreme.

We can understand also the girl who refuses any aids to her appearance out of resentment for her feminine rôle and the wish to be as masculine as she can. She will wear the plainest and stiffest clothes and she will train herself in movements which show awkwardness or abruptness rather than grace. Her preference will be for men's pyjamas and she will take every opportunity to wear flannels or a riding habit. In girls' camps we often find groups of girls who spend the whole summer in pyjamas or sailor suits. Even if it is meant in play, their play tells us much. They may deny that they would have preferred to be boys and wear boys' clothes all the time; but actions speak louder than words.

Another important physical experience with which a girl is faced is her first menstruation. Much can be done by a tactful attitude on the mother's part to reconcile the girl to her feminine rôle, even if she has rebelled against it in childhood. But most mothers are more terrified of this moment in their daughter's development than they would willingly admit. They will either neglect to prepare the girl in time or

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they will do it in such an awkward way that tension is sure to arise. It is incredible how few women know the physiology of menstruation. They have been told that a clearing of the blood is necessary every four weeks; and they believe that if menstruation stops a woman is pregnant; but that is about the sum total of their knowledge. Some girls wonder why men do not need this clearing of the blood and take it as another proof that women are the inferior sex. If girls knew the physiological processes involved and understood menstruation as an organically necessary preparation for motherhood, they would be proud of their development to maturity rather than frightened or repelled by it.

In our own time girls fortunately are much better prepared than they used to be. They are not taught to overstress menstruation or to regard it as a misfortune; but they keep all their normal activities and merely avoid going to extremes. And in this way, because they do not regard it as a calamity or concentrate on small physical sensations, menstruation has ceased to discommode them as it did in times when women would have fainting spells or retire to bed on the appearance of the menstrual period. Some girls, however, are still brought up in hothouses by pampering mothers; and on the appearance of their first menstruation faint, suffer from hysteria or vomit.

If a girl undervalues and depreciates women and at the same time is in despair about her personal appearance she will look for perfection elsewhere. No one gives up the striving for superiority; where it is defeated in one direction it is diverted to another. Such a girl will fill her life so completely with her profession or with some other activity that there is no time for anything else. A girl of eighteen, not especially pretty but with fine features, was obviously anxious to look



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as homely as possible. She is now in her second year at college, belongs to no sorority and professes that she has no wish to belong to one. "The girls in them," she explains, "look as alike as peas." She has not many friends, and if she makes contacts at all she prefers it to be with boys. Boys are better to talk with, she feels. She was asked if she thought boys were cleverer than girls. "Of course," she replied. She was next asked how she, as a girl herself, liked the fact that boys were cleverer. Didn't it make her resent being a woman? This she denied. Her only interest is in her work; and when she was asked what was her standing among the girls she said, "People in my college think that I have more brains than the other girls."

We do not really need to force a confession from her. It is obvious enough that she puts herself apart from the despised "girls" and wants to compete with boys. We find that she is the oldest of three girls and that the next sister is extremely pretty. Now we can see why she gave up all attempts to improve her appearance. She took it for granted that she would not be able to compete with women and she avoided a defeat in her feminine rôle by her exclusive interest in making a career. In her manner she was quiet and bashful; and unless we looked for the coherence of her whole personality we should never be able to understand what was unconsciously going on in her thoughts. It was her goal—to be taken as seriously as a man.

There is the social problem also to be faced at this age. Many girls, rather than face society as a whole, prefer to form very close and exclusive groups of their own age. This tendency towards isolation—for such it is in fact—comes from the feeling of insecurity they experience if they are among adults. We can often see them trying to increase their own

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courage by exchanging glances, pushing each other, giggling, and trying to force one of their number into the initiative. They seem to laugh without motive, because they can find nothing to say; they watch carefully to make sure that they obtain all the honours of an adult, are addressed as "Miss" and treated with courtesy. Friendships among girls of this age are at their height; and sometimes the friendships they form last throughout their lives. It is not unnatural that such girls, with no great experience of life, feel most at home amongst themselves; and their friendships have nothing to do with homosexuality, either openly or covertly. Their desire for tenderness is as great as ever; but they are ashamed to go and hide behind their mother's skirts. They exchange their affection, therefore, with one another and arouse the suspicion of being homosexuals.

This is the period, also, when girls make concrete their ideal of a future partner. As yet they have not had much choice; the only men with whom they came in close contact were their fathers, relatives and teachers. Their early experiences, however, have already laid down a kind of general ideal, derived from the most admired members of the other sex in their environment. It is natural, for example, that a girl who admires her father should feel most attracted, consciously or unconsciously, towards someone in whom she feels a resemblance. It is not due to any sexual attachment to her father; there is no Œdipus Complex or Electra Complex about it. It is part of her general striving for security. She may be very much misled, however, by this ideal of hers. She may fall in love with a man whose height is the same as her father's, whose hair is the same colour, or whose voice reminds her of his voice. On the other hand, if her father had been harsh and she has been in revolt against him, her ideal of

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a love partner may be in direct antithesis to him; and, of course, she may as easily make mistakes in admiring someone who, in some detail or other, is as unlike her father as possible. To these patterns derived from childhood experiences she is now adding others: in much the same way as she used a fashion plate to help to form her own ideal of herself, she may now use photographs of actors, film stars or athletes to form her ideal of a partner in love. And what we remarked on her early experiments in style holds also for her early experiments in love. She is not yet sure of her own taste; she is afraid of being laughed at if she makes a wrong choice; and generally her enthusiasms will follow where others have applauded before her. There is no call for criticism in these first enthusiasms; later on she will decide with more independence and common sense.

A girl's first approach to the other sex, her first steps in love, may happen soon or late. At some period every girl observes that boys are no longer mere playmates. She finds that men look at her in an unaccustomed way. A change will occur in her own attitude also: she now begins to compare boys and men with the ideal of a partner she has established. If a girl has been kept at home without the opportunity for meeting and joining with boys, she will find it much more difficult to make any contact with them. If she has been pampered, she may try to postpone any steps even of friendship with the other sex as long as possible. A thousand excuses can be found for this avoidance; and to tell the truth the demands of reality make some excuse necessary. So one girl will say that she cannot go out with boys because her arms are so thin that she cannot wear evening dress; another will feel that her complexion is bad or that her ankles are too thick. One will profess that she can find nothing to say

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to boys; another will be interested only in older people who do not pay much attention to her.

The means taken to avoid the other sex are often more definitely neurotic. We need say nothing here of the way in which common neurotic symptoms may be utilized for this purpose. It is clear, for example, that agoraphobia or the fear of going out of doors at all could very well serve to keep any possibility of solving the love problem at a distance. A means more often met with at this age is erythrophobia. A girl is at a loss when she is in company with men and being at a loss she blushes. She grows afraid that she might always blush in the company of men and she blushes out of her fear to blush. Now she is involved in a vicious circle of self-consciousness and she avoids all contact with men. Her blushing is the result of her training; she has never learned to feel friendly and equal with the other sex. Her fear of blushing, on the other hand, is her device to keep herself away from a situation which she feels as uncomfortable. Incidentally, it is worth remarking here that self-consciousness always argues a strong goal of domination; no one would blush or stammer unless he wished to make a very great impression on others.

Wherever information on sex is kept hidden from children and especially where they are told, "You will learn all about that when you grow older," the children are being stimulated to regard sexual experience as the main proof of being grown up. We will very often find children with such a training taking the first opportunity they can find to claim their sexual freedom. To be ignorant is a grave inferiority position and no one can be contented to remain in ignorance. Thus we will often find girls who have been repressed and discouraged in this way allowing themselves a great deal of sexual expression as soon as they feel free from observation.

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Indeed, if they are fighting hard against their parents they will not even take the trouble to conceal their experiments; they will use them as a method of opening up hostilities. It is to curiosity of this kind and to a false conception of freedom that petting parties and drinking parties are due.

Under prohibition drinking has an added attraction to many young people. They have not been allowed to drink when they were children, and drinking has seemed to them an adult privilege. At the same time the difficulty of getting intoxicating beverages is a challenge to them; it makes them seem heroic if they succeed. They feel (as we are always tempted to feel if anything is forbidden) that life has no pleasures if they are denied just this indulgence. Many a girl who would really prefer not to drink forces herself to do it: she wishes to be a "good sport" and she sees in drinking one way of becoming popular. There is another purpose served by intoxicants; they offer an excuse for doing something for which we would not have the courage to accept full responsibility. It would interfere with our personality ideal if we "let ourselves go" while we were sober; but if we do it while we are drunk we know where the blame lies. Philip sober disowns responsibility for Philip drunk; and if he wishes to do something which he is not prepared to regard as typical of himself, he need only get drunk first and his conscience will remain easy!

Drinking parties and petting parties are closely connected. Here, too, a girl will often drink in order to allow herself a freedom from which she would shrink if she had not disclaimed responsibility. Petting parties are much more frequent in America than elsewhere, and to some boys and girls they have come to be the regular substitute for normal sex life. Girls will join in these parties because they are afraid of

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being laughed at if they hold back: once they have conquered their scruples they learn to like them at the expense of their future attitude towards love and marriage. There is no need to overestimate the dangers of petting parties. Some adults take a very superstitious attitude towards them and regard them as a mortal sin. What we should rather say is that they are not a good preparation for a complete and normal sexual co-operation in later life. Many women have derived from such experiences the need—often unconscious—for certain ceremonies before they can attain a climax in sexual intercourse. Boys also acquire a wrong training for their impulses and interests; and many unhappy marriages and sexual disharmonies can be traced to habits and expectations formed by petting.

We are living in a time of revolt against the vetoes and restrictions of the past few generations. Girls have secured new liberties and as yet, perhaps, have not learned to put them to the best use. There are hopeful signs, however, that the sexual life of future generations will be much nearer to normality. Girls will always flirt and experiment before they commit themselves seriously to a love partnership which involves all their life; but in all probability they will not pet with anyone who offers himself or sleep with any man towards whom they feel the slightest attraction. With the growth of friendliness and equality between the sexes, it will no longer be expected that all contact between members of the two sexes must be, at its root, erotic; and boys and girls will both of them take a more hopeful and social view of love.

We have discussed girls who think it necessary to be popular at all costs and girls who think they owe it to their prestige to go as far as they can. Now let us turn to those girls who enter sexual life without any previous knowledge of its

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demands. For the most part they were children who grew up without brothers and without contact with boys in their childhood. When they reach the age of adolescence they are perhaps afraid of saying no; and they find themselves immediately involved, without having intended it, in a sexual relationship which cannot even be called a love affair. The following case is by no means as rare as we might imagine.

A girl of seventeen was an only child, brought up in close connection with her mother. The father's business compelled him to be away from home most of the year, and he was comparatively a stranger to the girl. Her mother watched over her so carefully that it was comparatively late before she learned anything at all about sex. She never had friends, neither boys nor girls. When she was sixteen her mother was rather discontented to have such a grown-up daughter, since she herself was still young and good-looking. She introduced her into society, therefore, with the hope of getting her married off as quickly as possible. A handsome young student invited her to come and look at his books. She went to his apartment and before she realized what was taking place sexual intercourse was already over. A pregnancy followed. After a few weeks the girl confessed to her mother that she had spent the time she should have devoted to her piano lessons in visiting a student, and explained as far as she could understand it what had happened. The mother found a way to secure an abortion for the girl and from that time on watched her still more closely. On one afternoon, however, the mother was unable to accompany the girl on her daily walk; and it happened, whether by accident or arrangement, that she met the student in the street. She refused to go with him to his apartment, but she was very much in love with him, walked through the side streets with him and let him

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kiss her. She was so scared that her next menstruation was delayed and so ignorant that she thought she had become pregnant again from the kiss. Once more she confided in her mother. After a few weeks of reproaches and alarm her menstruation reappeared.

She had been a happy girl but her two experiences frightened her so much that she refused to go out into company at all. Her mother, after six months' persuasion, succeeded in getting her to go to dances, but she always kept close by her mother and if she saw a young man who looked in the slightest degree like the student she had known she left the company immediately. She gave as her reason that she was afraid she could never resist anyone who reminded her of him. She had become shy and reserved, never at her ease in the company of the other sex; and it took many months to bring her back to poise and cheerfulness.

Of course we can never attribute such an attitude to mere ignorance; there must also exist a tension which prevents the girl from using her common sense. This was strikingly illustrated by a peasant girl who was brought up in a farming village. At the age of twenty-two, she was quite familiar with the way in which cows had calves and horses had foals, but when she fell in love for the first time and was kissed she was terrified lest she should conceive a child. Several influences contributed towards her tension. She had a brother four years younger than herself and he had always been treated as the favourite of the family. In consequence she was on very bad terms with him. Her father was a poacher in his spare time and the mother, a pious Roman Catholic, did everything she could to stop him. She laid information against him and he spent most of his time in prison. When he came back from prison he would always quarrel with his wife and beat her.



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The girl shared her mother's piety and the father would beat her also. With these bad experiences of the other sex, hostile to her father and to her brother, it is not surprising that she turned away from men as far as she could. We must add to this that her religious training had taught her to regard every sexual expression as indecent and impure. Her ignorance was thus fortified by an aversion from the whole subject of sex.

Our account of the difficulties of adolescence would not be complete without some mention of masturbation. Our culture is here more deeply involved in superstition than at almost any other point. Before we go any further, therefore, we should repeat what we have already said so often. Masturbation is a symptom, not a cause; and it never helps us to investigate and try to correct a single symptom. The personality is a unity in all its expressions and all the expressions tell us the same story. If we look at masturbation with common sense we shall see, clearly enough, that it is the symptom of a person who is trying to meet the problems of life alone and without co-operation; who has no great hope of finding a satisfactory solution of the problem of love, in especial, through friendship and partnership with a member of the other sex. If an individual is more interested in others than in himself, masturbation can never present a problem.

We must distinguish between the early masturbation of children and masturbation in adolescence or later life. There are instances, of course, of precocious sexual development when children of three and four can really be said to have developed sexual feelings, but such instances are rare and belong to pathological physiology. In general masturbation among girls in childhood has very simple roots. It is due to local irritation of the whole lower part of the body, especially

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of the mucous membranes of the genital tract. Such irritation is often caused by worms of the rectum; the children feel the irritation, relieve themselves by scratching and experience a feeling of pleasure in the process. It is only a psychologist with a completely mistaken point of view who could regard such practices as in any way primarily connected with sexual impulses; they are no different from the habit of some children in rubbing their eyes when they are irritated or in picking at the scab when they have cut themselves. Irritations in the genital tract may also be caused by the small cuts and scratches children may get when playing in the sand undressed. Some nurses or governesses without much sense of responsibility will teach their charges such sources of gratification in the hope of getting them to sleep earlier. Masturbation in childhood is nothing to worry over; if the child is healthy and finds plenty of things around it to interest and occupy itself, the habit will disappear without any special measures.

Mothers, however, often make it very difficult for the habit to disappear; they are anxious and horrified; they snatch the child's hand away, worry it and punish it severely. Many children are subjected to incredible tortures; they are put to bed with thick woollen gloves on; their arms are bound to the sides of their cot; or they are even tied full-length to a board, so that they must lie on their backs without moving an inch. It should really be obvious that this treatment perpetuates a craving; and if the children are embittered against their parents—and how can they help being?—they keep their impulse to masturbation as a way of being a nuisance and forcing attention. If a child finds such an efficient weapon, punishment will not make him give it up; punishment is only the expense he must pay for the attention he obtains.

The tortures are not only physical: parents seldom fail to

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picture the future of these children in the blackest colours. They prophesy that they will become feeble-minded or insane; they tell them that they will destroy their health and become victims of premature senility; they may even condemn them to everlasting perdition. The children have no means of knowing that their parents are lying; often enough even the parents do not recognize it. Frequently they have been given the same sort of treatment when they were children themselves, and they have not had the common sense to realize that the prophecies of disaster failed in their own cases. The children, therefore, are frightened out of their wits. Their tension remains with them through adolescence. They develop profound feelings of guilt with the awakening of their sexual life and revive or continue the habit of masturbation. Many of them believe that their addiction can be seen in their faces and of course this is an additional reason for them to avoid social life. In spite of their suffering they do not stop masturbating; to tell the truth, they *need* this discouragement as an excuse for their lack of social interest.

An illustration will show how far this attitude can go. A woman of thirty-two came for a consultation. She did not say what the matter was; she merely wanted an examination so that she could "learn the truth." Nothing was wrong with her and she was told so. She was unwilling to believe it and asked, "Did you really not find anything?" She could not be convinced that she was as healthy as anyone else and finally, under a great strain, she confessed that as a child she had masturbated. We should no doubt be correct if we concluded that she masturbated still; but she wished to minimize the "crime" by putting it back into her childhood. It was her opinion that her masturbation had entirely unfitted her for married life; if a man should marry her, she thought, he

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would immediately recognize that she had masturbated. In consequence, though she was quite good-looking, she refused every approach that was made to her.

We must now turn to another side of the picture and see that her self-consciousness over her masturbation was no more than an excuse for avoiding the other sex. She was the only child of an unmarried woman. She never had friends outside the home and she was always terrified of her mother. After her unfortunate experience, the mother had become embittered and highly moral. She kept her daughter in fear of men, telling her that every man was "after one thing" in his contact with women and warning her of the dangers and diseases that lay in wait for her if she had anything to do with them. Even now the girl was quite sure that if her mother learned of her masturbation she would kill her. If we take into account the unity of the personality, we shall realize that this girl was trying to avoid by her attitude the necessity for meeting problems she felt quite unprepared to solve. She was dependent on her mother but she could keep her superiority by masturbation. When she grew up she continued the habit to justify the isolation in which she found herself.

A rather different aspect of masturbation is shown when it is used by adolescents or adults to reduce sexual tension. Girls, for example, who indulge in petting parties become sexually excited and feel that there is no way of removing their excitement except by masturbation. They suffer from feelings of guilt, but, strangely enough, it is not the petting about which they feel guilty but the masturbation itself. Psychologically this tension is very revealing; an excitement is provoked, it is then "sanctified" as if nothing could be done about it; the provocation is forgotten or minimized, as if we were not responsible for it; and yet the reduction

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of the excitement is accompanied or followed by feelings of guilt! We may remark in passing that as long as we find feelings of guilt and remorse we need never expect a habit to be given up. The feelings of guilt are a subjective means of balancing the account without changing the style of life. By our actions we feel that we have proved ourselves "sinners"; by our remorse we feel that we have proved ourselves "saints"; and now we are free to begin the circle again. In our own culture, where happy sexual adjustments are not too frequent and where marriage is so long delayed, it is not easy to avoid all sexual tension; but if an individual is courageous and optimistic for his own future, sexual tension will never become a "complex."

The ability to achieve sexual satisfaction, like every other ability, is the result of training. Masturbation is not the best training for normal sexual satisfaction and much frigidity amongst women is the result of a training in masturbation. In full and normal adult experience, the woman reaches her climax through sensations derived from within the vagina. By masturbation a girl may train herself to reach a climax through external sensations only. Of course, such a training does not exclude the possibility of later adaptation; but a re-training will be necessary, and often the facts are not at all understood. Thus we find, as we have mentioned, women whose partners must go through a complicated ceremony before they can achieve satisfaction and this ceremony is looked upon as compulsive; indeed, without re-training, it acts as if it were compulsive. These habits and ceremonies can be changed quite easily if the second danger of masturbation is overcome.

This second danger has so far been very widely misunderstood, especially, perhaps, by physicians. People who attempt

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to solve the sexual problem in isolation are afraid, not only of the other sex, but of social contacts on the whole. We find them often developing eccentricities and strange traits of character. These "queer characters" have generally been supposed to develop their idiosyncrasies *because* they masturbated; but it is not really possible that masturbation should turn a sociable individual into an unsociable one. It is more reasonable to see in masturbation merely another expression of a training towards isolation; an individual who is not prepared to co-operate with others will not be prepared for sexual co-operation either. The real danger of masturbation, therefore, is that it still further narrows the field of social interest for individuals who are already tending towards isolation. If an individual masturbates, he has no need of the other sex in his attempt to solve the problem of sexual life, and he is not stimulated from this side to increase his interest in others.

The connection between masturbation and isolation can be seen clearly in the following case. A woman of forty-nine finally made up her mind to confess to her physician that she had practised this "crime" from her eleventh year. She had never previously mentioned it to a single soul; but she had gone about all these years thinking that everyone must be able to recognize it. She imagined, at the same time, that she was the only woman in the world who masturbated. This was a considerable triumph for her powers of self-deception; she was able to dismiss from her mind the fact that she had been taught to masturbate by another girl and so there was presumably at least one other person with experience of masturbation. It would have been difficult for her, however, to defend her isolation if she had not considered herself unique and unworthy of the society of others. It goes without saying that she had never married; and she could only bring herself to

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refer to the situation when it seemed that there was no longer any danger of an active sexual life.

Amongst girls, as well as amongst boys, mutual masturbation is not at all rare. These aberrations are generally put down to homosexuality and homosexuality is often treated as if it were an instinctive or hereditary compulsion. In Individual Psychology, however, we find absolutely no evidence that homosexuality is ever inborn. It is merely a strong expression of cowardice before the problem of making an approach to the other sex. A homosexual, if he corrects the mistaken conception of his own limits which he formed in his childhood, can always train himself to enjoy a full and normal sexual life. Girls turn into homosexuals only when they have a deep-rooted conviction that they are not fitted for the normal relationship. Thus we can often see girls of a "masculine" appearance amongst homosexuals. The reason for their homosexuality does not lie in their physiology; but they have despaired of attracting men and they interpret their less delicate appearance as if it were a sign that they are justified. Generally, indeed, they will stress their masculinity, walk in long strides, dress in mannish clothes, cultivate abrupt gestures and rough tones of voice and with an infinite deal of art produce evidence that they were designed by fate to be men. More passive girls, equally discouraged over their sexual rôle, will find a pleasure in being commanded by girls with an active masculine protest. They are spoilt children; they wish for tenderness and they wish also to have responsibility taken off their shoulders; they will therefore permit intimacies from girls of the more active type in the hope of being beloved and protected. On the whole, homosexual women are of these two kinds: the rather sulky, confiding, spoilt darlings who need a big strong woman to protect them, who are timid and

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do not believe that they could hold the affection of a man; and the rougher types, whose ambition it is to be the rivals of men because they have given up all hope of being women. We can see how each of them is pursuing a goal of superiority, the one by being dependent, the other by being masterful; and both are showing equally that they are superior to men and have no need of them in their sexual life.

We have said that homosexuality is always a curable neurosis; but we should not give the impression that a cure is always easy. The training for homosexuality has proceeded from childhood days and the discouragement over the sexual rôle can be very profound. We shall always find, moreover, that the greater the mistake the more important it seems to the individual that he should not admit it. A small mistake can be easily corrected; we do not feel that the justification of our whole personality is at stake. But many homosexuals make their aberration their whole claim for uniqueness and difference from their fellow beings and it would be a great blow to their prestige to recognize that they did not belong to an intermediate sex, to a Uranian type with a peculiar and awful sensitiveness, but were merely avoiding the possibility that they might be found insufficient for their sexual rôle.

Fortunately most girls, even under our present culture, keep their courage and their poise. From childhood they imagine themselves in the future as wives and mothers; and with this picture before their eyes they develop all their capacities in the most hopeful way. They do not say to themselves, "Shall I marry, or shall I follow a career?" for they know that the two are quite compatible. They suffer from discouragements, but their discouragements are short-lived and they recover their confidence and their optimistic activity. They make



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mistakes, for no life is free from mistakes. They may deviate from the path of normality, for absolute normality is a fiction and an ideal. But when they see their mistakes, they are happy to learn from them, and they are not so deeply discouraged as to regard normality as diminishing their prestige. They see the disadvantages of being a woman but they do not regard themselves as abused by a malignant fate; and the profession of a mother and a housewife still seems to offer them great possibilities of interesting, fruitful and contributive work.

## CHAPTER III

### *The Unmarried Woman*

WE have already seen how the girl-child and the adolescent girl approach life: we have followed them up to the time when they have finished growing and their physical and mental development is complete. The problem of social interest remains important through the whole life of every human being. After a girl's eighteenth year, or even earlier, the two main problems in addition to the social problem are those of occupation and of marriage. Some girls will make an alternative of these two problems: it all depends on the attitude they take to the sexual rôle and the demands they make of marriage. But we see clearly that more and more women elect not to marry, or determine to marry much later in life than was considered normal a generation or so ago, and that a new type of woman has arisen in the woman bachelor. Formerly, to become an old spinster was the worst thing that could happen to a woman: she did in fact become a burden to her family and to herself. Nowadays a great many women remain single, or marry comparatively late in life, from choice and not from necessity. While the real function of every woman is to be a wife and a mother and will remain so always, the opening of new professions and ways of occupation for women is nevertheless a blessing. For a married woman to have an occupation, paid or unpaid, outside of the home is one of the best ways, possibly *the* best way, to guarantee

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happiness in marriage. For an unmarried woman it is a vital necessity.

In modern life, an unmarried woman is not isolated from the general life of society as she once was. A single woman can now more easily than before overcome a feeling of loneliness by joining with one or more unmarried women. Especially is it true in America, where the great number and the importance of women's clubs demonstrate to what extent single as well as married women have a society of their own. Where women outnumber men, the chances of their marrying are obviously less. Even so, a larger proportion of women remain unmarried than the difference in the number of men and women would justify. When we have allowed for a number of unmarriageable bachelors, there are still more single women than need be. This fact is sufficient to make us pause and think. That so many women remain single cannot be explained by the absolute unattractiveness of these women; for it is not always the most attractive who marry, nor the least attractive who remain single: and indeed there is scarcely a woman in the world, at least when she is young, who does not appeal to some man. The fact that many single women are not celibate also forces us to conclude that even if they do not refuse sexual life, they do refuse marriage.

We have already examined many of the reasons that make girls develop an aversion for marriage and a fear of men. We must consider now which types of women will approach marriage in the right way and which will make a detour. It is first necessary to be quite clear which is the right solution of the problem of love and which is the wrong one. We must at this point state categorically that the best solution of the love problem is marriage, and marriage on the basis of monogamy.

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The institution of marriage as it exists to-day has certainly many disadvantages for both partners. But, however imperfect they may be, institutions of any kind are the result of an organic development on the part of men and women in a community, not something forced artificially on them. And when we come to look back over the past, we shall find that, by no matter what stages, in the end the monogamous union of man and woman came to be the norm.

The ancient Greeks permitted a man to have more than one wife, though the first wife had more rights and held the "official" position. In time, monogamy became the common practice. In the Old Testament we read of an astonishing plurality of wives, but gradually, with the progression of culture, a strict monogamy became the Jewish rule. Turkey has shown such a change in our own day. Though the Mohammedan law permitted a man to marry more than one woman, over the past hundred years by far the greatest number of Turkish families consisted of one husband and one wife. It is alleged that this was due to economic necessity and that rich men still maintained a complete harem, but—while this explanation is no doubt true in part—in actual fact the *idea* of marriage as it is conceived in Europe as a whole had so great an influence in Turkey that a great many husbands were married to one wife from choice and not because they could ill afford to support two or more. In the post-war reorganization of Turkey, monogamy became a law for everyone. In America, exactly the same development took place when, in recent years, the Mormons became officially monogamous.

But there are unwritten laws as well as official laws. We can observe to-day evasions of true monogamy, though the licence permitted to the two sexes is quite different. It would be only under special circumstances that a man's good repute,

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or social position, would be damaged if it were discovered that he had a *liaison*. Indeed, it often adds a certain lustre to his name, especially if the woman is attractive. But it gravely injures a woman's social position, and still more her repute, if it becomes known that she has strayed beyond the bounds of marriage. Times have changed in many respects; there are many things which women can do to-day which were formerly forbidden, but this is going a little too far.

There is a book on the physiology of women, written by the well-known German gynecologist, Liepmann. A picture in it shows us a family of birds. The female bird is sitting in her nest, looking after her little ones. The nest deserves special consideration, for it is built so high and so narrow at the top that only the head of the female bird looks out and she is certainly unable to leave it. The male bird is depicted as flying about outside and feeding her. Such, until the present day, was the general conception of family life for a great many people.

Doctor Walling published a book on "Sexology" in 1904, reprinted in many editions till 1909 and possibly later. In it he says: "The latest modern invention, which we fear will plague the inventors, is the suggestion that women are entitled to the same privileges as men in the conduct of political affairs, and in all offices of honour and emolument now monopolised by the sterner sex." In another passage he writes: "Even in the most intimate relations of marriage, love is expended chiefly in charming conversations, in acts and words which breathe only goodness, grace and delicacy."

If women suppose that this is how they will be expected to behave if they marry, it is small wonder that they strive to avoid it. We recognize that many men have a much more

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liberal outlook on life to-day than is typified either by the beautiful bird's nest or the poetry of Doctor Walling. Yet even so, the attitude of the most liberal men is often a sort of concession they make, which should be accepted as a special favour.

In former times, women had little enough choice in the matter. They had been brought up on the strict understanding that their only recourse, if they wished for any social standing or independence, was to marry. They made a dissatisfied choice between two evils and preferred marriage plus a social standing to singleness and none. In this century, however, it has become possible for a girl to make a life of her own and to avoid marriage if it seems to her undesirable. We can hope that the next generations will see how it is possible for everyone to establish a happy union on a right basis: we can contribute to the future by adapting ourselves to new conditions, by giving our children the right training for happiness. But at the same time, we must also look after the people of this generation and by examining their mistakes see if there is no way out, even for those who despair of finding a solution to this problem of love and marriage.

There are and always will be women who accept happily the thought of playing the rôle of wife and mother. These are the girls whose parents have neither pampered nor discouraged them. They were, in consequence, better prepared for life than others. They overcame easily the fear of the other sex, they chose with a right instinct the right partner for love and marriage. But such a girl does not suddenly make up her mind to look for a husband or suddenly find the right man.

We often observe girls who pay no attention to the other sex, who work hard throughout their youth and who, having

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reached a certain standing and security for themselves, want suddenly to marry. They are astonished and puzzled to find it is not easy. The girls who have no difficulty in finding a love-partner are those who have trained from childhood for the task; they have been prepared through their family life and other experiences for the right approach to this important problem. Often we observe that a girl who does not seem especially attractive, who has no very striking qualities, is preferred to another apparently far more blessed by nature and more gifted. The less attractive girl easily found a husband because she had something which made her especially attractive to a man. And what was that something? It was an expression of her past training in co-operation, an expression of her right preparation for life and therefore for marriage. Such a girl is not self-centred; she gives to the man of her choice the impression that she alone could guarantee him a happy future. It is true that a girl of this sort also fears the unknown future to a certain extent, but the slightest encouragement enables her to recover her poise. She will seldom fail to make her marriage a success, because she will be fully able to adapt herself to her partner and to make him willing to adapt himself to her. A sympathetic interest in the qualities, likes and dislikes of the marriage partner is far more likely to give rise to concessions than is a blind infatuation.

Girls who are not well prepared for marriage are chiefly those whom we have described in a previous chapter—the girls who found that the feminine rôle was little esteemed in the house of their parents. Their brothers were always in a privileged position: or the marriage of their parents was an unhappy one. Fear of men, or fear of marriage, may have been increased by religious training. Some marriage formulas state that “He, the Man, is your master, and you must promise

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to obey him." Again, girls may be struck by hearing that the punishment for mankind's first sin was that men should toil and women give birth to children in pain: accepted as a literal fact, this may affect them deeply. In numerous ways the approach to the love problem has been rendered difficult and alarming to these women. Yet for them too an acceptance of the destiny of woman may be made possible.

The different ways in which girls approach love and marriage will depend on their different goals and styles of life. All of them will strive to reach a goal of superiority but the means they assume will be various. Some, as we have learned already, will try to reach their goal by weakness, and some by open aggression. Let us take, first, the girl who has grown up so dependent that she cannot live without her family. She will devote so much of her time and activity to the care of the house itself that she will be an old maid before she is really grown up. She will take upon herself the care of each younger child in turn. When they are all full grown her first youth is gone and something of her attractiveness too; and she has never cared to become skilful in making herself attractive. Other girls will fling themselves into a profession with such zeal that they have no time or energy for social interests at all, and in consequence no real contact with the other sex. Still others, who cannot wholly suppress the desire to have children but still find the thought of marriage distasteful, pick out for themselves an occupation which brings them in contact with children, to whom they so closely tie themselves that they almost forget that the children are not their own. We have all met nurses and school-teachers of this type, who make themselves the slaves of their little charges and find thus an excuse for avoiding any solution of their own love problem. Other girls seem to be facing the problem, but



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select a partner who is anything but the right one and continually put off marrying. If they accept a proposal, they stipulate that first they must obtain the full consent of their parents or wait until this or that happens. The engagement lasts so long we may well doubt whether these girls intend to marry at all. It is well known that marriages which take place after a long engagement are seldom happy ones: the conditions that must be fulfilled before marriage is considered possible are so many that both parties are exhausted before their dream comes true. We know, too, that all conditions, all *ifs*, are safeguards, and the more *ifs* have to be dealt with before marriage the more signs of security are necessary and consequently the less courage is brought to the problem of marriage itself by the partners.

Here is an example of this type of woman. Miss B is a woman of thirty, who grew up with very strict parents. She is afraid of her father to this day, although she is economically independent and living in another town. She would never do anything unless her parents approved of it. Since girlhood she has been secretly engaged to a very domineering man. Apart from this she has made no friendships with members of the other sex. Although the engagement has now lasted twelve years she does not know whether she will be happy with this man, especially as her parents do not approve of her relationship with him. She would never marry against her parents' wish. Here we see clearly that she does not take marriage seriously at all. Yet she wants to have children, and—as we might expect—her profession is therefore that of a teacher.

We have already seen what valuable hints early memories give us when we seek to discover the style of life of any individual. An early memory of Miss B's shows us with clarity

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what her goal in life is. She recalled standing alone somewhere, with a doll in her arms held just as a mother carries her child: just herself and the doll and nobody else at all. We are right in concluding from this picture that even as a child, just as now in adult life, she had made no real contact with others, for in most early memories the people with whom the individual is in close connection appear—father, mother or the other members of the family. She was always submissive to her parents, afraid of them rather than devoted to them. The only sign of revolt she has ever displayed is that she does not break off the long-standing engagement. What she is really doing here is what all those do who have no serious intention of meeting the problem: she is seeming to say "Yes," seeming to go ahead and meet it, but in fact she is saying "But . . ." and drawing away from it. She is saying "Yes, I would like to marry; *but* . . . I don't know if I should be happy. This man is too domineering." And in order to insure her resistance against marital life—she is an unusually obedient daughter.

Then there are those women who refrain from any new friendship with the other sex after one disappointment. Of such we can truly say that they do not bring much courage to the solution of their problem, for everyone must somewhere, somehow meet with disappointment. It is not the only way of meeting such a disappointment to say: "Either him or nobody." As the object of their choice remains outside the realm of possibility—because he does not want to marry, because he does not love them, or for one reason or another—the whole problem is set aside. Such a woman protects herself from the possible reproach of having evaded the problem of love entirely by making the gesture of consent to one man where the gesture means nothing. It does not even indicate

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that she would have been happy with the "one and only," even if she could have married him. Such an attitude of exclusiveness indicates possessiveness and no partner can bear to be possessed. So we witness the spectacle of a woman of this type mourning for the "one man" until she is beyond the age when she can be expected to marry. The sentimentality of the last century made these women into saints, but to us their attitude is just another escape from reality. A laughable example, with a more realistic and a happier ending, dates from some thirty years ago.

An only daughter in a large family of boys was "jilted": a young man on whom she had set her fancy and whose addresses were encouraged by her parents did not come to the point of proposing but suddenly disappeared out of her life. So great was her grief that she had one of those convenient "nervous breakdowns." Petted and indulged by her parents and her brothers, she continued "ill," became a chronic invalid, and spent all her waking life very tastefully arrayed in tea gowns lying on a sofa, too weak to put foot to ground. Every morning her father or her brothers had to carry her downstairs to the sitting-room. She remained too weak for practical life until one day a girlhood friend of hers, who had made an unhappy marriage and then divorced her husband, called to see her. According to the common attitude to divorced women at that time, her friend should by rights have crept unobtrusively about the world and perhaps herself taken to a sofa and chronic invalidism. She had done nothing of the sort. She had bought a bicycle and learned to use it, joined a cycling club, and was pedalling about the countryside with other young women, in company with a host of eligible young men. When Miss C., the chronic invalid, learned of this and saw, through the window, her girlhood friend riding

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gaily away, she must have reflected seriously. The next morning, instead of being carried to her sofa, she rose and dressed herself in outdoor clothes, walked out of her home and—bought herself a bicycle. Far from continuing to mourn the lost “one and only,” she was before long married, and happily married, to somebody else.

Another type of woman who tries to avoid the solution of the love problem and its responsibilities is the woman of delicate health. Delicate people, those who are continually ailing, are often far more interested in themselves than in others. It is unlikely that any man can make them forget their physical condition. Yet formerly marriage was sometimes recommended as a remedy for delicate women. In the lightest cases it occasionally effected a “cure,” but the result of such a cure was almost always an unhappy wife and a dissatisfied husband. The reason is all too clear: such a woman had not prepared to co-operate and therefore not to marry. She could hardly be expected to feel so much interest in another person that she would place his welfare before her own. To marry for her own health condemned the experiment to failure from the start.

Other women are unable to marry because of timidity. Timidity is a very useful quality for forcing someone else to pay one a great deal of attention, for evading responsibility oneself. Children know what an excellent method it is to be frightened of the dark if they want to occupy their mother's attention, if they want not to be left alone. The mother must sit by the bedside; the child has the upper hand by the simple expedient of fearing the dark. We may suspect that a woman who gets her own way in life by timidity was just such a child. When she grew up and was expected to make her way in the world independently and found herself ill prepared to

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do so, then fear was of very great assistance to her. Let the following case speak for itself.

A girl, twenty-one years old, had for a whole year suffered from such terror that she was quite unable to go out into the streets alone, or if it were absolutely necessary, then she could only run, not walk. When walking slowly, she had the feeling that everybody looked at her and that they might ask her embarrassing questions. What had really happened, it was discovered, was that a friend of her father had once met her in the street and had asked her, jocularly, how it was that she was not married yet. In the fear of being asked this question lay the explanation of her strange affliction. She knew that her parents expected her to marry and that the girls in her group generally married early in life. In fact, she was the only one in her circle who was still single. Her parents suggested now one young man, now another as a possible suitor, but she could not make up her mind which one she would like to marry. Since she was so timid and could not go out alone, she never accepted any invitations from men, and consequently she was not plagued with suitors.

The roots of her fear were numerous. Her brother, three years older than herself, refused to go out with her when they were children because he was ashamed of having such a fat sister. Her father, a strong, rough and uneducated man, never managed to create any real intimacy or understanding either with his wife or with his children. The girl herself was always very shy. She had been greatly spoiled by a nurse who was with the family for twelve years. She did not like going to school. She could never decide on any profession. She embarked on several jobs but was so deeply discouraged that, when she found success did not come instantaneously, she abandoned the attempt at a very early stage. Meanwhile, she

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tried to become slender and lost forty-four pounds by a forced regimen. In the course of losing so much weight, she developed a nervous disease with spells of intense fear, induced by the thyroid and iodine she was taking. Her parents were forced to send her to a sanatorium and the forty-four pounds had to be put on again at considerable expense. However, her illness had its advantages. She learned how useful fear could be to her, how it freed her from all responsibilities. A year before she came for psychological treatment, her parents took her to a fashionable summer resort where they did their best to make the right social contacts so that the girl might find a husband. Unfortunately, she was so bashful that she failed to attract any man seriously: she was especially bashful with the young men who appealed to her. It was after this experience that she gradually developed her inability to go out. She knew her parents wanted her to marry and she wished to get married herself, but she was afraid of it and even mistrustful of her ability to get married. The perfect solution was to be in so poor a state of health that she might stay safely at home. Fundamentally, she really did not want to marry at all: it is always safer to judge by what people do than listen only to what they profess to wish to do. The girl did in fact stay at home. She did in fact avoid contact with others. After being treated, the girl entered an art school, abandoned her fears, and began going out with young men to theatres and parties.

There are women who, on the grounds that they met with some shocking incident during childhood, excuse themselves for avoiding contact with the other sex. On this score, we must insist that an experience of this kind is, of itself, no more important than any other experience which left an impression. What we experience in life is of moment only according to the importance we ourselves give to it. The

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following case will show how such a "trauma" can be made use of.

A woman of forty-nine told me her life story. When she was seven years old her father made advances to her. She did not know exactly what he meant but she felt instinctively that he should not have done it. She never spoke a single word to her father after that, left home early and did not even know when he died. She was the youngest of five brothers and three sisters, the favourite of her mother and of her oldest sister. She always pitied her mother greatly for being married to such a man. They lived on a farm and the mother had a hard life. They could never keep a maid because her father ran after them all. Her brothers were very brutal to her, and teased her, so that she grew up disliking everything masculine. When she was eleven she went to live with her sister in a city, where she studied and became a teacher. At the age of twenty-three she became engaged to a man who was a cripple. This first choice of hers shows exactly how she esteemed herself and that she considered that only a handicapped man would be an equal partner for her. The engagement lasted three years, the marriage having been postponed by her several times. Her fiancé finally insisted upon marriage. She broke the engagement because a picture of her father making advances to her constantly appeared before her eyes. She could not think of herself in any such situation with her fiancé. In the course of time she made several other friends, other men proposed to her, but always when marriage seemed imminent, the same picture appeared. At the age of forty-eight she made the acquaintance of a man with whom she spent much of her leisure time. She discovered that she was in love with him, but this time the picture of her father did not appear. The man was married. She was quite safe,

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because, living in a small and strict community as she did, she knew that anything more than friendship was out of the question. She no longer needed the picture of her father to protect her.

There are other women who hide their fear of men and of marriage under a complicated disguise. Seeing them, we might think them really anxious to find the right marriage partner. They are considerate towards their men friends, they are interested in everything their men friends do. But their relationship with these men is very definitely established on the basis of pure comradeship. There is no opportunity, no opening for courtship. Some of them assume a maternal attitude towards men, so that the men would not dream of thinking that such a girl would consider them as possible partners in life. Others conduct many flirtations, will go so far as can be in a "platonic" love affair; but the moment they are called upon to redeem the promise that their attitude indicates, they are alarmed and quickly retreat. Others, though permitting many liberties to the young men with whom they flirt, make a great point of preserving their anatomical virginity.

Many American flappers, and the "demi-vierges" of Europe, are representatives of this type. The species is dying out, but there are many examples who survive. It has been observed by some people with alarm, and by others with approval, that there are modern girls who refuse to enter marriage without having had a practical experience of sex life. Significant of this tendency is the case of one young girl of twenty-two who found herself pregnant, and disliking the idea of having an illegitimate child, tried to get rid of it. She did not for one moment consider that she could marry the man responsible and give birth to the child. She refused



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the suggestion with the words, "I am not going to marry the first man I have lived with." Perhaps it is true that the preservation of technical virginity is no longer considered as important as it once was, but there are still a great many men who foolishly take its preservation as a proof of purity. A great number of girls visit gynecologists, wishing to have their virginity restored so that they may seem more desirable to men whose proposals they wish to accept: but at the same time there are many men who marry virgins and little suspect the liberties that those virgins have permitted. Among rural populations where the inhabitants live closer to nature, life is in some ways sounder. In some peasant communities in Europe, a woman must have given birth to several children before she is considered a fit wife for a farmer. Yet even these women want to preserve the virginity of their daughters; they feel degraded by having entered upon marriage after such obvious proofs of pre-marital relationships.

Finally, among those who meet the problems of love and marriage wrongly are those girls who look only for what is called "a life of pleasure." Their self-esteem is so low that they cannot imagine a man might be fond of them for any other reasons than mere sexual attractiveness.

The increasing economic strain of post-War times, which has made marriage and the establishment of a home more difficult, combined with the increasing number of women who have entered the various professions and occupations, has resulted in a new kind of relationship between men and women now quite commonly established. Possibly the rise of this independent relationship, which used to be called "free love," can be traced back to the beginning of the century. But it was after the War that there appeared what, in France, is called "*la garçonne*" or, as we translate it, the bachelor

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woman. The *garçonne* is a new type of woman—economically independent, with a job of her own, desirous of establishing independence in her love-life too. She does not refuse marriage as a principle, but marriage is not an aim when she considers an intimate relationship with a man. How are we to account for this tendency which undoubtedly exists to-day?

This enthusiasm for what is called freedom in love is really only a way out for the woman who fears that she will not be able to attract a man for very long. These "free" women believe it easier to win several men temporarily than to win one man permanently: and they think their chances of getting a man at all are better in this way. The responsibility that a man undertakes in such a union is so diminished that even a girl without marked attractions feels that she may stand a chance. Perhaps the excess of women over men in many European countries after the War made competition much keener, so that women felt they had to offer more in accordance with the laws of supply and demand.

These "free" unions would actually be justified only if either the man or the woman had serious reasons for not marrying and having children, as, for example, if one of them had a serious and inheritable disease or was absolutely unable to get a divorce. There are countries, for example, where the insanity of the partner is no cause for divorce. In instances like these, there seems no reason in common sense for depriving any man or woman of a complete life.

But let the following example—which could be matched by hundreds like it—show what the so-called "free love" affairs are in reality. A young woman who was a nurse, and a young man who was a writer, had engaged for six years in a free love relationship. In theory, everything was perfectly

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clear; they retained their self-determination and they were living together only as long as they chose. At the end of six years, the woman became pregnant. When the man learned this, he offered marriage. The woman accepted. From that moment, the man did not exchange another word with her. Immediately after the wedding he left her and refused to have anything to do with her. He showed no interest in her health while she was carrying the child, none in the birth of a son, and contributed nothing either to the mother or to the child. The woman was unable to continue her work as a nurse, as she could no longer spend the night in hospital, because she had to care for the child. She worked in an office. She had a hard time of it for two years, and from time to time was obliged to put the child out to nurse and see him only on Sundays. After a few years, mutual friends effected a reconciliation between the two. The woman asked her husband why he had changed his attitude towards her. He explained that he had not expected her to accept his proposal of marriage, since the basis of their relationship was free love. He put it in this way: "One must be able to be the martyr of one's ideas." She replied, "Yes, that is all very well, but you had the ideas and I was the martyr."

This simple phrase puts the whole question of free love in a nutshell. Free love puts all the responsibility on the woman and takes it all off the man.

The risk which women run in such a relationship, apart from pregnancy, is too great. The years in which women can acquire a new partner are less than for men. On the average a woman may find a mate from her seventeenth until her fortieth or forty-fifth year. A man's chances of finding a partner in life are unlimited. Probably more men get married between the ages of sixty and seventy than women between

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the ages of forty and fifty. So that even if a "free" union does not injure the woman's economic position because it leaves her free to pursue an occupation, it still injures her chances of finding a companion for her old age. We need not point out that it also prevents her from having children, so long as the attitude of society is such that if a woman has illegitimate children she loses whatever social standing she had before. To live in a congenial social circle is as essential to every human being as is food or a home.

In the choice of a partner we shall also see quite clearly what a woman's preparation for love and marriage has been, how much courage she brings to this problem. It is alleged that women are worse off than men in this respect, because men have a far greater freedom of choice and of approach. It is true that women cannot act in the same way *as* men in choosing a partner, but it is not true that they have less freedom in approaching the other sex. Often, indeed, they take the initiative by a glance of the eye, an apparently unconscious gesture, by their general bearing, in attracting the notice of men and in encouraging them to approach. They do not, at later stages of acquaintanceship, actually propose in so many words: but they make it possible for a man to propose and men seldom propose unless something has made them suspect that there is at least a chance of their being accepted. There is in this no real inequality between the two sexes.

Before we consider the different types of men girls might choose, we must say what we consider would be a right choice. Ideally, the best partner for a girl would be a man of corresponding age, a few years older perhaps, with the same educational background and physical health, the same economic and social standing. This would be ideal: but any

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other combination can turn out well if the choice is made courageously, with a full consciousness of responsibility.

Generally, however, a girl, because of her inferiority feelings in being a woman, will look for the partner who seems to her to offer the least risk. A girl may choose a man much older than herself. She feels that he is a man already at the zenith of life, having achieved more than a younger one, having a higher social standing, being economically more secure. The self-love of a very ambitious and spoilt girl is flattered, too, by the thought that an experienced man who has a selective taste in women should have chosen her. It enhances her self-esteem. The man's position in society will be a guarantee of some social significance for herself. She will not be called upon to contribute to the family income, and if she is afraid of bearing children then the best excuse for not having a child is to marry an elderly man. If a girl has been very much spoiled by her parents and entirely untrained for accepting responsibility, then to marry an elderly man will offer good prospects for getting and keeping the upper hand. An elderly man can be made to feel very grateful if a young girl "sacrifices" her youth. He will adopt a fatherly attitude to make up for the realization that he cannot share and cannot understand the pleasures of young people. This puts him into an inferior position with regard to his wife and gratifies her need to feel her superiority.

Other girls will prefer very young men or men at any rate younger than themselves. The struggle for superiority is clearly demonstrated in such relationships when we consider that a man in his early twenties is often just beginning to establish his future, while a woman of the same age is generally well advanced along her career. She will be "farther on" than her husband. It is even more clearly shown when a woman in

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her thirties has a love affair with, or marries, a man in his early twenties. Surely these women must see that the chances of maintaining a harmonious union are small: in time the disparity of age will become more and more marked. The husband will compare his wife with other, younger women; or (what is perhaps more grave) she will fear that he does. She will always be afraid that he is slipping away from her: she will redouble her efforts to keep him, she will seek to dominate and control him more and more. Such a relationship cannot, surely, be meant to last.

Still other girls, out of fear of men or of marriage, will pick out men who are obviously unsuitable as husbands—irresponsible men, neurotics, invalids, unpractical or dreamy men, or homosexuals. The wish for a lasting union in such cases seems certainly dubious. Some girls are great virtuosos in this art of being unlucky in love.

There are girls who complain that they attract only married men. They attract only married men because a married man presents no danger: they are not called upon to consider him as a possible husband and therefore they can be as natural and charming with these safe men as they please. But when they meet an unmarried man, who might be a husband, these same girls lose their poise, become affected, act strangely, are either boyish and arrogant, or silent and timid. They are afraid of having to meet the problem of marriage and try to save their superiority by this queer behaviour.

There are those who explain away their awkwardness with single men by saying that they are afraid that, otherwise, men might think they were trying to get a husband. In this, too, we see the mistaken attitude of women in supposing that they have to be grateful if a man wants to marry them. The fear is increased if the girl happens to have had a love affair before:

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she regards herself as quite unworthy of marriage and behaves all the more awkwardly.

At this point we might consider the experiences of a woman of this type. She is thirty-two years old and unmarried; secretly she resists marriage, believing that a woman's life is over the moment she marries. She avoids making friendships with men who might think she wanted to marry them, and therefore she goes about chiefly with married men who could not imagine she had so selfish an object. What made her like this? Since adolescence she has suffered from an unpleasant skin affection on her face and the upper part of her body. This, of course, gives her a real inferiority feeling for which she must compensate. But even without that she had many feelings of inferiority about men, and especially about marriage, which arose during her early childhood. She grew up thinking herself neglected and put in the shade by her older sister. This sister was delicate, needing special care and food: but the younger sister interpreted such attentions only as favours that were denied her. She described her father as a tyrant who bullied the whole family and still does. As a child she much regretted her inability to make money and take her mother away from such a husband. Even to-day she has not ceased regretting she is not a man. From such an attitude to life we may expect that she will do everything possible to acquire as many masculine attributes as possible, even if she cannot change entirely. Young people are often greatly struck by the fact that men have a right to a free sex life and that women have not. And so we see her choosing this one point to show how much of a man she was. At the age of twenty-three she had her first love affair with a man whom she knew she could not marry. Brought up strictly as she had been, and coming from a family of good standing, we must

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take this action on her part as a strong protest against her whole environment and against her feminine rôle.

Her hostile attitude towards her sister and her father was further established when her sister forced the father to break up this first love affair of hers. Since that time she has had many changes of men friends. In some she was interested from a physical standpoint only: with others she had an intellectual friendship.

A division such as this is a good way to depreciate the partner. If, for instance, she was content with a comradely friendship with a man, it meant that he did not attract her sexually. When we consider her personality as a whole, we can expect to find other expressions of her discouragement: and, in fact, she changed her occupation frequently, now playing the piano, now taking up millinery, now doing one thing, now another. In every activity after a certain time she became so tired and exhausted that she had to give it up. This symptom of tiredness is an easy way of justification, of saying: "If only . . ." In fact, it says, "What success might I not have achieved, how far might I not have gone, but for the fact that I get tired so easily."

A preference for married men can, however, have another motive, common enough in many girls. Some of them will do everything in their power to attract a man who belongs to another. Consciously or unconsciously, their goal is to conquer. That is their greatest wish. It comes out not only in the choice of partner, but in the manner in which they approach the other problems of life, in their dress, the social contacts they make, how they spend their leisure time. Their self-esteem is low and it demands victories.

The more victims they make, the higher that self-esteem rises. The moment any man really becomes attached to them,



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their interest is gone and they turn elsewhere for a fresh conquest.

It is not our duty here to examine how many girls indulge in extra-marital relationships. We are not considering the life of a girl from a moral standpoint; it is our task only to see what does happen, to find out why it happened and what purpose it served. We are neither urging nor condoning the new freedom of women: and very emphatically we are not arguing in favour of free love. The best we could wish for both sexes would be early marriage without any previous experiments. Perhaps this is an ideal for the future. An ideal can never be attained, for the moment it is attained it becomes a plain fact and ceases to be an ideal at all. Yet ideals point the direction in which it would be desirable to progress. In reality, we have always to adapt ourselves to existing conditions and make the best we can of them. We might now form the conclusion, therefore, that every individual man and woman may do what he or she likes so long as he or she is able to take the full responsibility for their actions. This the individual can only do if his or her actions accord with common sense and the welfare of others. Common sense is always in key with the future welfare of mankind: the future of mankind and indeed its very continuance needs children. So there will always be marriage, of some kind or another, different perhaps from marriage as we known it to-day, but an expression of the needs of mankind. And monogamy will always be the goal towards which individuals will strive, if they are able to abandon their private compulsions in favour of common sense.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Marriage*

IT would be impossible to enter a discussion upon married women without first investigating the present state of marriage. It is a commonplace to say that at the present time marriage is unsatisfactory to both partners. The quantity of books on the subject of marriage which have been published during the past few years indicates how important a problem marriage has suddenly become and how much individuals suffer on account of it. Yet, at the same time, unmarried people are also dissatisfied: paradoxically enough, single people envy those who are married for having found a suitable partner, while married people envy the single ones because of their freedom. We might go so far as to say that a marriage neurosis exists.

Many scientists have made efforts to bring about an improvement in marriage and have carried on inquiries into the reasons for its failure from several angles. Some of them consider that marriage is a biological problem; others think that its difficulties can be solved from the intellectual side; others again consider it as a purely sexual problem. There are those who believe that a change in economic and social conditions would remove all the difficulties. As, however, each of these deals with but one aspect of the whole situation, we could hardly expect a complete solution from any one. The chief difficulty, in fact, lies in our whole understanding of the relation of human beings to one another. Doctor Alfred

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Adler once said that "love and marriage are never the private affair of anyone; they are the concern of the whole of mankind and they constitute a social problem." By these words he meant that of all the situations in which human beings find themselves there is none which depends so much upon their ability to co-operate, and to rid themselves of egocentricity in favour of another person. It is indeed the most difficult thing for the majority of human beings to establish a relationship which is free from egocentricity and free from all suspicion of a battle for prestige.

There is no difference between the two sexes in the matter of prestige. Many failures in marriage, many causes for discontent in marriage, arise from a wrong understanding of prestige and a wrong struggling to appear important. Prestige is often mistakenly confused with self-respect. Now self-respect or dignity comes from an objective judgment of one's own qualities. Prestige is a subjective judgment influenced by the wish to impress others. People who are lacking in self-confidence make their feeling of self-respect and self-esteem depend upon the impression they make upon others. Of course, a genuine human dignity is never injured by doing something which is beneath our prestige: the individual who knows his own worth and value can do anything he chooses as long as it is useful and in keeping with common sense. But if the individual's self-esteem is low, then he will attempt by means of prestige to prove to himself and to others as well that his value is more than he, at heart, knows it to be or thinks it. His actions will be directed by his anticipation of their effect upon others: as for instance when anyone thinks that a certain occupation is beneath his dignity. The truth of the matter is that it is beneath his prestige. His attitude is wrong: no honest and serious occupation can be

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beneath anybody's dignity, much as he might like to think it beneath his prestige.

Why is it that human beings are so anxious that their prestige should not be injured? The answer is, of course, that they are not confident of their own worth. Only a man who does not believe in his own worth needs proofs of his worth. If we walk along the street and know where we are going we do not stop to ask people the way, but the moment we are not sure of our direction we shall ask directions more or less frequently. Even here people differ. A courageous person will take a chance and ask less than a person who neither trusts himself nor others and who therefore, from lack of confidence, needs many proofs and assurances that he is on the right way. He wants to be certain of not going wrong. And so it is with people in their path towards the superiority goal. They want to make quite certain that they never take one step aside, or backward. In order to do so, they make a point of impressing others and of never giving in to any one else.

Whom do these people want to impress? Obviously, the person by whom they themselves feel oppressed. We have already seen in the chapter on character development how a child revolts against the person on whom he feels dependent. The same thing happens in marriage: if one partner thinks himself dependent upon the other, he will take every opportunity of proving that of the two it is really he who deserves the greater consideration. This is so whether the dependence he feels concerns economic or sexual or social matters. The fight for prestige in marriage expresses itself in little things but it is these trifles that bring people to the end of their endurance. There are a thousand little ways in which a partner in marriage may imagine that he owes it to his prestige not

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to put up with this or with that. Perhaps a husband wants to stay at home in the evening, but thinks that because his wife wishes it he must go out, or thinks that if he does not go out his friends will imagine that he is a henpecked husband. Perhaps a wife would willingly make much of her husband, spoil him and give him every consideration but she thinks her prestige would suffer if she did so, that her mother or her friends would laugh at her. If there is a difference of opinion, or an argument or tiff, neither party will take the first step towards reconciliation because of prestige. The offended party will not take the first step because if he did so he imagines he would go down in the other person's opinion: he must insist on showing how offended he is. The offender, on the other hand, knows that he is in the wrong and thinks his prestige would be lowered if he admitted a fault. So the friction is infinitely increased by a trifle, multiplied ten times by prestige.

It may sound a little startling, but in our opinion it is really the offended party who should always take the first step towards reconciliation. The one who offended is hardly likely to feel angry with the injured partner: he will be willing to make peace. The injured partner can best show readiness to restore friendly relations: he does not feel secretly in the wrong and he is less tense. Unfortunately, some people feel they have to insist upon an elaborate apology because they owe it to their prestige, and therefore the offender, on his side, prefers to keep at a distance since his prestige tells him he has no need to make a friendly approach to a person he has just attacked. Men are especially prone to this false pride, more, perhaps, than women. There was a young couple who had been engaged only a few weeks. The girl asked what would happen, if, after they were married, they should quarrel. The

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young man replied that in his opinion if the husband were at fault there was no need for him to apologize; that would be beneath his prestige. His wife would see, in time, that he was no longer cross. Soon after this conversation the engagement was broken off. It would be impossible to deny that the girl was right when she concluded that the young man would not be the right partner for her. He was not the right partner for any one and indeed he married later on and was divorced after a few years. His prestige made it impossible for him to adjust himself to another person with whom he lived in such close contact as marriage demands.

A married couple with a four-year-old child got on rather badly with each other. They had both been only children, they had both been spoiled and each of them expected to be pampered by the other. The husband spent all his spare time at home fiddling with the radio, the wife went out every evening. When it was suggested to her that if she began to pay more attention to him he would be glad to pay more attention to her, she refused in a very energetic way to take any such first step. She said he might get conceited if he thought she cared for him. Her prestige would not allow any such thing, though it is very certain that her dignity would in no way have suffered.

Another grave cause of misunderstanding in marriage is the idea of possession. There are men who cannot bear to see their wives doing embroidery in their presence and wives who cannot bear to see their husbands reading without interrupting them every few minutes. Both are jealous because they do not have the absolutely undivided attention of their partners, and think that unless they get absolutely undivided attention, they are not loved. There was a man, for instance, who took this attitude so strongly that every now and then he

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used to ask his wife, "What am I thinking, sweetheart?" and if she did not know what he was thinking, then he doubted her love. Less remarkable, but very characteristic, was a husband who was domestic and whose wife liked to go out. He resented going about with her, because he feared she would pay him insufficient attention if others were present. At last he managed to interest her in some work she did at home on the typewriter. Even then he was no better off, because he felt offended with her because she was concerned with her own thoughts and ideas and not with him, and he grew jealous of the typewriter as he had been before of people.

Jealousy and the possessive idea can only arise from a feeling of insecurity. As long as any one is sure of being loved, he has no need to be jealous or to want his partner to devote all attention to himself. But the moment there is the least fear of losing the partner there is a need for greater and greater proofs of affection. No one likes to be forced to do things: the moment one is constantly reminded that one *ought* to love and *ought* to demonstrate affection love can no longer be spontaneous. Jealous people behave in the same way as those children who misbehave because they think they are neglected: they get attention, as they wanted to, but it is not the most favourable kind of attention.

The way in which any individual chooses a marriage partner indicates clearly the degree of his courage and his self-confidence. If we consider the personality as a unity, we understand that every one will choose such a partner as seems to fit into his secret plan of life. Every one, therefore, will attempt to complete his personality ideal through the partner and at the same time attempt to reach his goal of superiority. He will admire an individual with the qualities he himself lacks

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but most wishes to have. A small person will have a special liking for a tall one, a weak for a strong one, a phlegmatic person for an excitable one. Others, more pleased with themselves, will feel that only an absolute likeness can guarantee perfection, and while this often applies to physical build and appearance it also explains the choice of partner from the same social level or from the same race, and the refusal of everything strange and foreign.

Marriages are entered into for two reasons: love and convenience. It is not possible, actually, to separate these two completely. No choice is ever all for love or all for convenience, as is sometimes imagined. Love is generally defined as a climax of sexual attraction and devotion. A marriage of convenience is arranged for the sake of economic or social advantage. Yet even in love we understand that there is a valuation of the partner and beneath the blindness of love there is often much calculation.

One person loves another because so many qualities attract him. He is pleased by the external appearance, traits of character and so forth and the admired qualities are valued without conscious regard to purpose. It can happen easily enough that the qualities which are attractive prove to be those which the individual feels will serve to advance his own striving for significance. In love, therefore, there is also an element of convenience too. In the same way, sexual attraction plays a larger part in marriages of convenience than is sometimes thought, though it is relegated to the background.

We see, then, that love and convenience are not entirely in opposition to each other, for often love would not exist without motives dictated by reason, while marriages of convenience seldom take place unless there is also a bond of sympathy. In both sorts of marriage, however, there is clearly



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revealed the exact degree of self-confidence possessed by each partner, and exactly how he or she values himself or herself. The days are long over when marriages were arranged by families, and the two partners saw each other for the first time at the wedding ceremony or even—when they were married by proxy—long afterwards.

If a marriage were really entered into entirely out of convenience such a union could hardly be called a marriage at all. It would be a business partnership and would make no claim to happiness. Even such a union could turn into a good marriage, however, if the partners were objective enough to give each other a chance and if they were willing to do their best. Often the marriage of convenience turns out better than a marriage entered into out of wild and romantic love, where one partner put the other on a pedestal and worshipped blindly. People who are capable of doing that expect much more from marriage than it can ever give. During the time they are engaged, both individuals try as a rule to appear at their very best and they succeed because they are not together all the time. For the short time during which they meet they leave their troubles behind and come together in holiday spirit. Everyday life with all its little perplexities and trifling worries can never duplicate those circumstances: the couple after they are married will postpone disappointment only so long as their relationship is exposed to no special strain. The moment there is a strain which cannot quickly be overcome, one of them will discover that marriage is not so beautiful as he had supposed and the partner not so godlike. It is the partner who will always be blamed, too. The complaint will be: "I would love him just as much as I used to if he would be as he was at the beginning." In taking this attitude, the disappointed partner will not stop to consider that

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he or she also has changed. It is actually almost impossible to determine who "changed" first. There is disappointment: there is the fact that the honeymoon did not last, that it cannot last, and that a honeymoon is an exceptional state for both parties.

The poet, Goethe, has written, "Nothing is more difficult to bear than a series of perfect days." There is a deep psychological reason for it. In such days each person is anxious to hide from the other many shortcomings and weaknesses, the existence of which in himself he is fully aware. Each wants to preserve the ideal image, that the other has of him. Of course, if this wish is associated with actions, if the person not only *wishes* to be but also *is* better by continual efforts, then while at first playing a rôle he later grows into it and really does adapt himself to the other partner. In such cases, the first difficulties in marriage will be few and gradually there will be a continued and increasing congeniality. An intelligent man once said that in a successful marriage the first year is the most difficult.

But there are people who cannot sustain their rôle and then tremendous tension is created. Even if the other partner does not understand what is going on, he too will feel the tension and a crisis will arise surprisingly early. As the crisis has been preceded by a long state of tension, it will arise out of some trifle which, of itself, without the tension, could never have had such results. Various individuals will take various ways of seeking relief from the tension. Some abandon any pretence or restraint, show their true natures with great crudity and so disappoint the other. People of another kind control themselves so strongly that they become irritable and nervous and destroy the peace of marriage. Another way of escape is through ill health, which is designed to compel the

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partner to give in on every point in order to save the ailing one's superiority.

Where such a tension has arisen, the battle for prestige constantly hinders any chance for a better understanding. The habits of one partner will disturb the other so much that he cannot bear them, while the partner cannot possibly give up the habits because for him too it becomes a matter of prestige. Everything that upsets the one becomes sacrosanct in the eyes of the other: life together becomes intolerable.

One young couple had been married two years. He was very neat, she was rather careless in the way in which she looked after the home. Each tried to convert the other to his own point of view and so of course neither of them changed their habits. The more particular he became, the more untidy she grew. Both insisted that they loved each other, but in fact their motto was really, "I love you so much that you must do what I want." At last they separated and now they are the best of friends. Neither of them is disturbed by the other's habits since they have given up fighting each other. She is no longer untidy, he is no longer fussy. But were they to become reconciled and live together again we may be sure each would once more expect the other to adapt himself. Is there not a great similarity in the attitude of these people to that of the fighting child who picks his nose the more his mother admonishes him not to? The moment the mother could make up her mind to pay no further attention to the habit and allow the child more independence, the habit would disappear overnight. We are pretty sure to be right if when we find people who cannot get rid of little habits of any sort, we take it for granted that in their childhood they found such little habits a good way of keeping their mother's attention and they felt a great triumph when her attempts to correct them

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proved futile. By these means they felt stronger than the grown-ups, and indeed they were so: and little habits can give them the same feeling of satisfaction when they are adults themselves, in much the same way. The moment the same little habits no longer prove distressing to somebody else, they abandon them.

Every individual wants to be loved as he is and not as he appears to be. This really means that every individual wants to be loved in spite of his faults and does not even try to correct them. He demands as a proof of love that not even his worst habits should be unacceptable and unaccepted. Why strive to correct them? If the love of the other person is large enough, it will not be necessary.

There is no difference at all between the two sexes in their attitude towards marriage. The problems of marriage, the seeds of failure in marriage, are human problems. They may be taken more seriously by women than by men. Men more often than women have an outlet and a distraction in their profession, while women, if they have no special activity outside the home, have more time and indeed more occasion to brood over their troubles. If women had more interests outside the home they would then have more self-confidence too, by reason of their success outside, and would not take everything that happened at home as being unfavourable to their prestige. They would feel their own worth and would not so much mind the little injustices which are bound to occur in every human relationship. Also, they are as a rule economically dependent, and this fact often puts them on the look out for any diminution of their prestige and makes them more sensitive.

And all those women who have grown up with an inferiority feeling because they are women, who have seen and

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experienced unhappy marriages in their own lives, who have a poor opinion of woman's position in marriage will always be looking carefully to see if all goes well. Some women even expect the worst from the start, as the following case shows. A young woman of twenty-five came to the clinic suffering from a depression which had set in a few days after she married. She came from a home where the only brother got all the attention and where the father was a very domineering man. The marriage of her parents was a failure. Though her own marriage was for love on both sides, she expected the worst. She confessed with tears that she was so happy in her marriage that she could not expect it to last and therefore fell into a depression. From day to day she was waiting for her husband to turn into the devil that she believed every husband actually was. By being mournful, tearful and depressed she had hoped to placate him, make him put off for a while revealing himself in his true colours. And if, in the end, her husband had grown displeased with her weeping and misery, she was prepared to take that as a proof that, after all, she had been right to expect the worst. She did not see that she was the one who had changed. Her husband had married a gay young girl who turned immediately into a fountain of tears. So long as she continued her wrong attitude towards the whole problem of marriage she could never understand the position and she would keep on accusing her husband of not having lived up to her expectations.

Even though this example may seem a little extreme, there are many women who adopt the same attitude towards marriage and the fate they expect from it. Their fears are backed up by statements certain scientists have made and by the position women hold in many countries. Some scientists have said that the submissiveness of women towards men is

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inherited—a statement which is very pleasant hearing for men, if not for women. Then of course we are always being reminded that among some races women doubt if their husbands love them unless they beat them. In other countries women are still kept in much the same status as slaves. In parts of Europe, if the pair travel about, the man rides the mule and the wife walks behind the mule, carrying most of their belongings on her back. In still other countries, the wife is allowed to eat only after the men of the household are done. Religions have contributed to increase the fear and resentment women feel about marriage and have increased, therefore, their self-consciousness and over-sensitiveness towards their husbands. Religious formulæ and wedding services include some such phrases as “He shall be your master” and “You shall obey him.” Even if this formula has been changed in law, children still read or hear the older phrase and know how things once were and fear they may be so again. And so in many ways women have more reason to fear marriage than men. They will in consequence need more means of security in order to save their superiority-goal. This explains why the majority of neurotics are women, since we know that every neurotic symptom is an attempt to establish security.

We have already seen under what tension people enter the state of marriage. Few individuals indeed are properly prepared for it. The ability to adapt oneself to another, the ability to co-operate does not come easily to many people, yet in marriage the most important factor is the art of living with someone else. The saying that marriage is a gamble is all too true: every one tries to win in this game. Every one wants to get the most out of it with the least investment. Before we can adjust marriage, we have first of all, therefore, to remove this tension which exists at the start. We can only do it by

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educating people to understand themselves rightly, to have a right understanding of their sex rôle and of the purpose of marriage. They must come to a right understanding of love. Of course, there are those who confuse love with the feeling they experience if they "have a crush" on somebody or if they are in love with love. They forget confidence and friendship. If a marriage is begun only under the auspices of a "crush" or if a couple readily "fall in love" because they want to be in love, then all too soon they will have little or nothing to say to each other and the emptiness that makes itself felt will increase the tension. They will turn to hobbies, take up bridge, rush to night clubs and think it a catastrophe if they find themselves at home one evening with only each other for company. Deep understanding and friendship, combined with common interests on the one hand and freedom of action on the other, are the requisites for a marriage and the remedies for the tension.

The rules and laws established for the protection and preservation of marriage are often blamed for its failures. So is the compulsion to be faithful. A great many people accepted gladly Judge Lindsey's proposal for companionate marriage under the conditions that as long as there were no children, divorce should be easily obtained with no alimony for the woman. He drew up his proposal after observing, truly enough, that the idea of possession is often the bitterest enemy to marriage. He noticed that so long as people conducted a love affair without being married, seeing each other only a few times a week, they did not claim each other's free time: but that when people are married, jealousy often arises and a wish to dominate and to possess the other. We, from our standpoint, must reject this idea of the companionate marriage. Marriage, to us, demands the greatest possible adaptability

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combined with the wish to establish the relationship as a lasting one. But how could any one wish to adapt himself thoroughly if he contemplated dissolving the relationship the moment he did not like it? We do not expect a person to throw up his job the first moment he meets with a disagreeable experience on the path to success. The lack of real seriousness in such relationships must hinder the development of real interest. In a marriage which can be so easily dissolved neither partner will give himself or the other a fair chance. Discontents which seem intolerable may prove to be only transitory, and when the cause for them is removed the marriage can go on again successfully.

We are not suggesting that it should be impossible to dissolve a marriage which fails to satisfy both partners. There are many reasons which may make it undesirable for both. Divorce must be obtainable, but under the full responsibility of both partners, and only if there have been serious attempts on both sides to remove differences—not only such external differences as unfaithfulness or money quarrels, but differences of character too. We think that the time is not far removed when an experienced psychiatrist will sit beside the judge in every divorce court. He will be in favour of divorce only if it proves impossible, even after psychological treatment, to bring the partners to an understanding. This would be but the last act in a play, however. By the time two people find themselves in a divorce court, the bitterness is already so deep that it would be difficult to convince them that the situation is not as bad as it appears at the moment. Too much hurt pride has accumulated from the hostile atmosphere; it would be difficult now to show them their errors. And errors on both sides there will have been. If a marriage is not happy it is never one partner alone who is to blame. Both partners are



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responsible. One may have struggled more than the other to keep the peace, but even he will never have been without fault. Often a third, objective friend could have helped them greatly if one or both had had the courage to talk things over with an outsider. But as every one is ashamed of failure, it is generally too late by the time people come to confide in third parties. If there were some institution where expert psychologists could be consulted who worked without consideration for the money the single individual paid him, then much unhappiness could be avoided, and much misunderstanding cleared up: for love lasts much longer than hate and is much more powerful.

Far more essential, however, than this hospital for curing broken marriages would be an institution for training people for marriage, which would educate people to co-operate, to be good partners, and would give them a proper understanding of how to choose the right partner. Everybody entering marriage ought to be made conscious of the responsibility he undertakes both for himself and for the other. If the wish to make the marriage a success is not predominant, if the preparedness to make it so is lacking, then sooner or later there must be unhappiness. The interest of the partner should always be put higher than one's own: otherwise there will not be success.

It is possible that the construction we put upon unfaithfulness will meet with considerable opposition, though we shall attempt to justify the standpoint we take in insisting that every act of unfaithfulness arises out of a desire for revenge. That is, of course, if the marriage was a love match: if it were a pure marriage of convenience, or if there were no real love between the partners when they married, then it follows that there might well be others who promised more in the way

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of happiness than the partner did. But where there is real love, then friendship and sexual attraction are so concentrated on the partner that the feeling of responsibility does not permit even thinking of anyone else.

Goethe, in his little-known *Das Tagebuch* wrote, "*Sehr viel vermag die Pflicht, unendlich mehr die Liebe.*"—"Much can be accomplished by duty, infinitely more by love." The moment a partner succumbs to unfaithfulness it can only be out of discontent or a feeling of inferiority towards the other partner of the marriage. He feels he is insufficiently appreciated, or does not get enough affection, and takes this opportunity to satisfy himself. Notwithstanding the remorse he may feel, he does get a feeling of satisfaction and superiority out of it. "What would my partner say if he or she knew?" "I can still attract somebody else, so I don't need to feel so inferior towards my partner." There are those who go so far in their desire for revenge that they let themselves be found out, or even confide in the other. If there were the least doubt whether unfaithfulness were really a form of revenge, surely these two facts establish it. The best excuse for justifying ourselves lies in the supposed compulsion of our feelings: but how often does it prove that the extra-marital love is not genuine and that the new love is given up as soon as it has served its purpose—after the divorce is obtained, after freedom is won, after the marriage partner has been humiliated and so forth! It is the commonest thing in the world for married people to be reconciled once one of them has vented his anger by showing the partner that he or she "is not the only one" in the world.

Naturally not everyone who is discontented in marriage will be unfaithful. He will be so only if such an action is in accordance with his style of life and his goal. Others take other means: they go in for religion, politics, charitable

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works, drinking, gambling, squandering money, quarrelling, growing ill, developing nerves and so forth—whatever seems to guarantee an easy success. All of them have the purpose of excluding the partner from the inner life and of creating a sphere of activity wherein the feeling of defeat can be compensated. Many of the activities we cite are, in themselves, excellent ones and ones which need the attention and devotion of people. Yet whenever we see an “either or” being made out of one of them—whenever we see a person choosing one of them for their chief interest rather than their marriage, then we never fail to consider the marriage unhappy. Of course, a person who is happy in marriage will have well-developed social interests, will therefore have an open heart for the needs and sufferings of others, and in striving to share his happiness with others will take an interest in politics, charity and other activities of the sort. But such a person will never become a fanatic or make his marriage secondary to his outside interests.

There is another factor very apt to disturb the harmonious relation between husband and wife and that is the economic dependence of women. In our culture it is, as a rule, on the man's shoulders that the economic responsibility of the family rests. If there is real love between man and wife, money will never play a disagreeable rôle. The moment the relationship is disturbed, however, the money question provides a perfect weapon with which to rule the other partner. One of them can spend too much, the other can be too thrifty: it will serve the same purpose as any irritating habit. There is more power in money than in a habit, however, so that trouble from that source can arise sooner and more easily than by any other means.

There are, of course, husbands who think they can smooth

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away any difficulty in their marriage with money, and that if they are generous, then no other adaptation or concession on their part is necessary. Indeed, since they have the financial responsibility and are so generous, they consider that their every wish should be obeyed. Instead of giving affection, they really ask how much it costs.

There are women who have a similar attitude. They measure their husband's affection by the money he spends on them. There are married gold-diggers as well as single ones, whose only use for a man is to have him provide them with the luxury they need or think they need. These are the ones who, if a man loses his money or his position, immediately divorce him. Luxury hid the real cleavage that already existed: now that the need is for both of them to see what luxury can be given up, what retrenchments can be made and by what means the reverse can be met, it is the marriage itself which is given up.

The whole problem of woman's economic dependence in marriage is a psychological as well as a social problem. Money has only the importance an individual gives to it as a means to increasing his power. The idea of property is so strongly rooted in the minds of human beings to-day that often it seems a real sacrifice if they share it with another, though they claim to love the other. It is strange to see people marry and keep their money separately. They are willing to trust their future, their happiness and their life to the partner—but not their money. It means, of course, that money is overvalued and also that there is not a real confidence in such marriages.

This whole problem has bulked larger in importance lately since women have established greater economic independence by their own efforts. The attitude people take to the problem is remarkable. It used to be the custom in middle-class

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families for a woman to give up work when she married. If she went on working or took up work again afterwards, then it was taken as a sign that the husband was unable to supply all the comforts the family needed. In consequence, many husbands discouraged any attempt on the part of their wives to work and even if their income was insufficient would still rather manage as they were, and economize somehow, than let the world think them failures. Nowadays men are coming to regard a working wife as less of a disgrace, though there are still those who do not like the idea. They are afraid their wives will cease to pay them sufficient attention and also that their wives will get too much power. They really need their wives to be dependent on them in order to feel significant. It is not easy for a man to rule his wife by doling out money to her if she can make money herself.

What of men who marry women with private means? These are not able to rule their wives by means of money, since the wife retains the management of her own income. Yet while they do not resent such economic independence, they do—some of them—resent it if a woman earns the same amount by her own efforts. How can we understand this? A woman who makes an economic independence by her own work reveals her independence in her whole attitude; and it is independence of character that many men fear. Indeed if the woman herself is not co-operative and if she competes with her husband, she may draw his attention in a thousand subtle ways to the fact that though she is only a woman she is earning as much as he or even more. If he makes a suggestion as to how her earnings should be spent she will object violently to his interference and use her economic freedom to assert her own superiority. If, on the

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other hand, she has acquired her money without any effort of her own she may still feel weak and dependent and be only too glad to throw the responsibility on her husband.

The best way to prevent this difficulty rising would be to pool both their incomes in a common fund and to have from the beginning equal rights to draw on this fund. Such a measure could be applied only in marriages which are entered into with full responsibility and confidence; but these will be the only really successful marriages. There should never be a question who contributes the more and who spends the more. Both should strive to the best of their ability and both should have the same responsibility. The fund serves the purposes of both and gives equal advantages to both; for their marriage is a partnership in all things. With such an arrangement, even if the question of divorce arose, there would be no problem over the disposal of the common fund and no necessity for alimony. They would divide their possessions, and they would share the responsibility for the children of the marriage. In all probability this would mean a common agreement that the partner who took care of the children contributed a little less than the other to their support. If such a plan were followed, women would be stimulated to find an occupation for themselves and men would not need—as sometimes happens after a divorce—to pretend to be out of work or even to give up work in the hope of ridding themselves of the obligation to provide alimony.

There are times, however, when a woman cannot follow an occupation and cannot contribute to a common fund. These are the times when she is bearing children or nursing them. In these circumstances the husband may compensate—and he should take it as his duty in honour to compensate—by

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increased efforts for the diminution in their income. The woman, too, is having a harder struggle, and if she brings up her children to be courageous, responsible and independent she has made as big a contribution to the family life as the husband. Children are the greatest asset of a family; and if women did not fear that the troubles of the family would be increased and the economic standard lowered, if they should take on this function of womanhood, they would not so often revolt against it.

There are even circumstances—we must regard them as exceptional—when it is impossible for the wife to find a suitable occupation and when she can contribute more by staying at home than by going out to work. In such a case she should at least have a decent allowance which allows her the feeling of independence. If money is kept in her husband's control and handed out grudgingly there is bound to be friction and tension. Many women dislike housework because they feel that they are treated worse than servants. A servant has board and lodging and a wage to dispose of as she pleases; but many married women must depend on the generosity of their husbands for every penny they receive. They get a housekeeping allowance, perhaps; but that is all. If they want money for their own purposes they must either scheme to get their husbands in a good mood, or they must contrive to subtract it unnoticed from the housekeeping allowance. If they do this they can never rid themselves of a feeling of humiliation. Let us suppose, for instance, that the housekeeping allowance is ten pounds a week; why should the wife be compelled, if she wants any money for herself, to secrete one pound from her allowance and cover up the deficiency? She should never have occasion to resort to these tricks to avoid disagreeable arguments about money;

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it would be better if, from the beginning, it had been recognized that the housekeeping allowance was nine pounds and she had one pound a week to do what she liked with.

Sometimes men explain, to justify such arrangements, that women are irresponsible in money matters; they have no head for money and if they were allowed free entrance to the family cheque-book they would be senseless and extravagant. We have seen, however, that meanness and extravagance are both of them means of fighting for prestige, and there could be no fight without adversaries. If a woman has her own responsibility for spending her own money, where can she find someone to accuse of meanness? She no longer needs to stress the point that she needs money. The husband, for his part, if he feels no satisfaction in keeping his wife dependent on him, will not be tempted to stinginess; and if her money is her own, he will not be able to accuse her of extravagance.

We are led to another problem by this discussion of economic independence in marriage. Should a married woman find an occupation outside the home or should she devote all her time to household affairs? This problem is only acute where economic circumstances are easy and it is not absolutely necessary that the wife should contribute actively to the family income. In other cases it solves itself—women *are* taking up occupations outside the home. We may still regret the fact, however, that occupations for women are so often regarded as stop-gaps. On the whole women are not trained to be as confident of their value in work as men. So long as it is taken for granted that women should have careers only if they are unmarried, or, if they are married, only to eke out their husbands' incomes, we cannot expect them to exert



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their best efforts or to achieve as high a general standard as men in work outside the home.

Sometimes we can see very clearly that women are regarded as interlopers in professional activities. Apparently serious economists have argued that unemployment could be reduced if women were dismissed from their jobs to make room for men. Only an individual who believed in his heart that women were naturally dependent and inferior could conceive such an idea for a moment. The problem of unemployment involves the whole community. It is not solved if men are given work with the hope that they will support women. The somewhat milder proposal that married women should be satisfied to stay at home and look after the household still reveals an undervaluation of women's capacity for contribution. Fortunately the majority of men are in favour of some kind of external occupation for women, even if they are not prepared to concede them unconditional equality.

Let us now see how women themselves regard the problem of occupation. Our mothers were certainly not prepared to accept the idea that every woman should be occupied outside the home as well as in it; and, to tell the truth, housework in those days was so complicated and demanded so much supervision that it could easily be a whole-time job. Women of our own generation have usually been brought up to regard it as exceptional for a woman to have a career of her own; they have not generally set their interests and ambitions in work as naturally as men and they may either face the situation with too much tension and anxiety to justify themselves or distract their attention from it and wish that it would pass them by. Thus women at work are inclined to look for the easiest jobs—"dead-end occupations"—or, if they are active in their protest, for jobs which they themselves feel secretly as too

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difficult for them. However it may seem to the most enlightened and well-poised women, for the great majority of women it still seems that men have the first claim in the field of professional activities and the highest chances of success.

But what are the real circumstances? Labour-saving devices, the progress of technique and the increase of organization have greatly diminished the time and the toil that need be spent in housework. New theories in education have shown us that it is desirable to bring children into contact with one another at the earliest possible moment; and the age at which children enter the nursery school is earlier and earlier every year. Some modern theorists would have us dispense with the home as far as possible and propose that a child should be taken from its parents almost at birth and brought up under scientific management by well-trained strangers. Such experiments, however, have unhappy results; and from our own standpoint we should expect nothing else. Every child is most favourably situated if it can have the closest and most intimate connection with its father and mother; for its outlook upon life depends on these experiences. From its mother, whether she wishes it or no, the child gains its first conception of social feeling; the mother is the child's bridge to other human beings. From its father the child gains its first conception of responsibility and its first knowledge of co-operation with someone other than its mother. No child can be denied this close contact with its parents without danger to its development; and if it misses these advantages we can only make up for the loss by reproducing the situation as closely as we can. Thus we may conclude that while every aid should be utilized which can relieve and brighten the tasks of the parents, they must still remain the friends, intimates and guides of their children.

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If we recognize these facts, we are a good deal nearer to a solution of the problem of outside occupations for married women. A mother should certainly subordinate her activities to the interest of her children at the time when they need her most—until they are able, for example, to go to a nursery school at the age of one and a half or two years. Even during the previous period, if the economic conditions of the family allow of her securing help, it is good for her to give at least part of her time to external activities; but not at the risk of becoming a stranger to her children. The financial side of the problem is covered if the activities of the mother secure enough additional income to pay the expenses of engaging help. After the child is old enough to go to a nursery school, it is very strongly to be advised that the mother should find a serious external interest and occupation. This is best, not only for the parents, but also for the children, as we shall see in the chapter on Women in Business. Let us consider it now, however, as it affects the happiness of husband and wife.

It happens only too often that when a mother is occupied all the time with her children and the tasks of the household she has not wide enough interests to keep alert and cheerful. There is no stimulus for her own development, and the details of her daily life come to have an overwhelming and disproportionate importance. The same round of work exhausts her; she has no subjects of conversation but small mishaps and troubles. When her husband comes home, she unloads all the trivialities of the day upon him and bores him to distraction. She feels that her work is not sufficiently valued and becomes irritated with him in her turn. Tension results, and an unhappy home life. If, on the other hand, she has something outside the home to interest her equally with the children, she will be in a much better frame of mind. Her feeling of accom-

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plishment will give her satisfaction and increase her resistance against petty frictions; and if she contributes to the common income, her economic independence makes her feel secure and equal to her partner.

From his own side, the husband will value her more highly, for she is really able to contribute, she is not dependent on him and she can keep her cheerfulness without being an extra burden on him. He himself will be more willing to help her in the household management, for it will not seem to him a demand from which he should be spared because of his own contribution in making money. Housework should never be despised; it is a contribution as high as any other; but it is often women themselves who make it seem a menial and undignified kind of work. They resent it themselves and complain endlessly that they should be condemned to such insignificance.

Where there are many children in the family, the mother, of course, is occupied with her children for a longer time. Even so, however, she should never lose contact entirely with external interests. The time is coming, much sooner than she expects, when the children will need her no longer. When they are grown up, if she has not kept herself in training, she will find that she does not know what to do with her time. If she has been used to governing the household and finds her position taken away from her she may easily sink into melancholia; and even if she fills her time with travel or bridge playing, she will suffer from feelings of emptiness and consider herself deserted.

The best path through life is never an extreme. Home and career should never be treated as exclusive demands; and while we are here showing that all stress should not be put upon home life we are not suggesting that home life should

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ever be sacrificed. We can make human beings happier only if we can convince them that the interests of others go before their own interests; and this co-ordination in common interests can best be practised in the family. It is of inestimable advantage if children can see that their parents put their own interests below the interest of the whole family. They learn in such an atmosphere to co-operate with their parents and their brothers and sisters; and they train to be able to display the same feeling and attitude in adult life among their fellow-men. Such a co-operative attitude can never develop if the first impetus to it is not given by the parents.

Married couples themselves would be far happier if home were a place where they did more than sleep. More than eat, we might say also; but it becomes more and more a custom for meals to be taken outside of the home. In some ways, this is unfortunate. The family table was often, and can still be, a place where every member of the family left behind him his own troubles and tried to please and entertain the other members. It provided an excellent opportunity for human beings to learn to give one another serious consideration. Thus the home has been, and we may hope, will always be, the centre of the family, a place where all the members can find recreation, rest and peace. Only a happy home can really guarantee the happiness and fruitful development of our children; and it is on the home that the future of mankind depends.

We have discussed in this chapter some of the most frequent causes of marital friction. Plenty of others could be found; and, indeed, everything that happens in life can be erected into an obstacle that nothing can overcome. We must turn now to another side of married life which sometimes provides difficulties—difficulties which are often exaggerated

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and built up into catastrophes. Our study of marriage would not be complete if we did not consider the sexual training of men and women and the problems in the way of adaptation between the partners. Often a difference in opinion on sexual matters is made into a reason for a breach of marriage. We shall hope to show that if a marriage breaks down over the question of sexual adaptation, the two partners would have found a reason to break it in any case. Sexual adaptation is not so compulsive and terrifying a factor as most people assume; it is a problem which can always be solved between friendly and equal partners. Sexuality plays a very great rôle in the life of every human being; many people treat it as if it were the most crucial problem in the whole of our existence; and so, even if we are to try to oust it from this sacred position, we must still give it a special consideration.

## CHAPTER V

### *Sexual Adaptation*

SOME schools of modern psychology have accustomed us to believe that a marriage is made or marred by the sexual adaptation of the partners. This is a sad inversion of the truth. We could much more justifiably say that the sexual harmony of a marriage depends on the friendliness and co-operation of the partners. The other point of view could occur only to spoilt children who demanded that every wish of theirs should be gratified. We are not minimizing the importance of sexual life if we insist that it is only a part of the whole of life, and only a part of marriage in particular. We are not minimizing it, either, if we insist that wherever sexual disharmony exists the remedy lies not in a concentration upon sexual gratification but in an increase of consideration and interest between the partners.

We may say, indeed, that apart from a few limiting and abnormal cases a good sexual adjustment is possible between any man and woman who are interested in each other and fond of each other. All that is necessary is that they should keep their courage and their common sense and not feel humiliated by any temporary difficulty; and this attitude is already implied when we suppose that they are interested in each other. On the other hand, if the partners are egoistic and unsure of themselves, with the "now or never" attitude of the neurotic, they will feel every difficulty in the way of adjustment as a personal injury and defeat. Instead of seeing

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how they can improve the situation, they will be tense, they will look for a miracle to happen, and when no miracle happens they will think that they have done all they could do and fate has cheated them. But even if we push the difficulties in the way of sexual adaptation to extremes we can still recall instances of happy marriages where the sexual expression was never completely satisfactory, and there have been dismally unhappy marriages where, from the sexual side of the relationship, there was no complaint.

We must admit, however, that there are many spoilt children in the world and there are many men and women who stake all their self-esteem on their sexual lives. Such people will have difficulty in the intimate co-operation of love and it would not surprise us if they attributed every failure in life, every disagreement in love or marriage, to a lack of sexual satisfaction. There are some individuals who attribute all their difficulties to their health. There are some who attribute them to their financial position. Others, backed by the august authority of psychoanalysts, decide to throw the blame on sex. If a gratifying sexual activity were so all-important, what would happen to the couples whose sexual activity diminishes in the course of nature as they grow older? What would happen to the couples whose sexual activity is interrupted by the absence or the illness of one of the partners? Would they immediately be driven into neurosis as a signal to the world that they were placed in a position in which they could no longer carry on?

Not only the Freudians overestimated sexual activity. Long before they came amongst us it was much ventilated as a panacea. Doctors often recommended sexual intercourse for a young man's pimples or a young girl's anemia. Old maids were supposed to grow vinegarish and bachelors crotchety.



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It was not always seen that a physiological explanation was unnecessary. A bad-tempered woman and an unsociable man were not very likely to find marriage partners; and if nobody came along to "love them for themselves" their grudge against the world increased. We can understand how sexual activity, for men at least, came to have so much importance given to it. Sexual efficiency was supposed to prove "manliness" and every man was pursued by a compulsion, "I must, I must." Because he paid so much attention to this factor, because he was so anxious to prove his success, he was overburdened and he blundered. His inefficiency stirred up grave inferiority feelings; he was proved insufficiently "manly" and he applied his inferiority feelings to his general situation. He was not a "man" at all, he felt; if he had been, he would have shown it in his sexual life. For women, on the other hand, it was a cultural demand that they should never under any circumstances enjoy their sexual lives; but they, no less than men, felt defeated if they could not at least attract members of the other sex.

We must now draw a distinction between sexuality and the sexual urge or instinct. We have seen that inborn or inherited qualities never express themselves as pure compulsions in human life; they have always been made over and adapted to the individual's goal and they are allowed only the expression fitting to his style of life. If an individual's goal is to be thin, for example, he can control the urge of hunger so that he eats as little as he can and becomes even a virtuoso in starving. At the beginning he must train himself, but as he grows accustomed to eating so little the habit becomes mechanized; it becomes part of his life. Now if he wanted to change he would have to train himself again and go through all the difficulties of learning to eat more. But if it is part of

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an individual's goal to eat as much as possible he can train his stomach to an enormous capacity. Our inborn urges do not dominate us; we dominate them.

The sexual urge is still more capable of adaption. Let us consider two extremes. If it is an individual's goal of life to be a saint, he will train himself to be free from all sexual wishes. They do not fit in with his style of life and he does not need them. If, on the other hand, it is his goal to conquer as many members of the other sex as possible, he can train his sexual capacities to an incredible degree. We are talking, of course, of real continuous life interests. It is not sufficient for a man to have the wish to pass for a saint or like the idea of being a Don Juan. He must take it for granted that that superiority lies along these lines and he must exclude other impressions and interests. Many a would-be saint has really the goal of fighting with his sexual impulses, not of excluding them. He wants to feel that in spite of suffering from unusually strong impulses he succeeds none the less in doing nothing about them. For this purpose he must be perpetually stirring up his sexual strivings and perpetually denying them expression. Thus he feels himself doubly a hero; a monster of iniquity for being so tempted and a pattern of virtue for so nobly resisting temptation. His attitude is not far from the attitude of the would-be Don Juan who finds himself, unfortunately, incapable of sexual expression at the appropriate moment. For both of them the goal of superiority lies in the conflict and their sexual life is in exact accordance with their personality.

Our sexuality will also be influenced by our cultural standards and the tastes we have developed. Let us again use the comparison with hunger. Every one has adapted his mere need for nourishment to certain social demands and certain

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private preferences. We do not eat whenever our stomach tells us to eat; or perhaps we would rather say we do not leave it to our stomachs to tell us when to eat. We adapt ourselves to meal-times and to conventions of eating. At the same time we like some kinds of food and dislike others; and we may even be disgusted by foods which in themselves would be perfectly wholesome. These preferences we have derived from a long training. Some of them may come from our conceptions of proper diet, some from our social strivings and personality ideals. One individual will like food with "no nonsense about it"; he likes to think of himself as bluff and hearty and he likes to make his eating into evidence of his character. Another will like refined and delicate foods for much the same reason. One individual will think that steaks are vigorous, "manly" food and he will train himself to live on steaks. Another will like caviare and game because they are luxuries and he thinks himself entitled to luxury. All these preferences will derive from the picture of himself which the individual drew in his childhood and they quite evidently show the striving for superiority. In very many instances preferences are still more directly derived from childhood training. A mother who wishes her children to stop asking for certain foods—for economy, perhaps, or because she thinks them unwholesome—may describe them in such a way that they avoid them through all their lives. If, on the other hand, the children are in opposition to their mother, it is exactly the forbidden foods that they will hunger for most. Many children find it an excellent way of bullying their parents to make a great deal of fuss over their eating and to show signs of indigestion the moment their wishes are not granted. Their fastidious habits become mechanized and they retain them even in adult life. If a child in a large

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family feels neglected he may draw attention to himself by not being able to eat what the others are eating; he must have a special diet for himself. These likes and dislikes acquired in childhood remain constant until other experiences and other aims correct or increase them. It happens, moreover, that some individuals, disappointed in certain aspects of life, conceive that they can satisfy themselves, if nowhere else, at least in eating; they become gourmets or food hogs.

All these examples could be paralleled in the realm of sexuality. An adult has never the "sexual instinct" he was born with; he has trained and developed his own kind and degree of sexuality. The material for this creation of his was the experiences he went through as a child. The cultural attitude of his environment gave him his first stimulus. He asked how children were born, he asked what the difference was between boys and girls, he asked whether he would marry and have children when he grew up. He was investigating the world and his questions had no greater significance to him at first than his questions on how the clouds stuck up in the sky or how he could tell his left hand from his right. But he found his questions on sex answered in a difficult way and perhaps avoided altogether. His first picture of the rôles of the two sexes he drew from the answers of the adults in his environment. Perhaps they frightened him and he concluded, "That is nothing for me; I must keep away from all that." Perhaps he felt. "There is something funny about it; it is a joke and I must not get laughed at for taking it seriously." Other children conclude, "Sexual life is a nasty experience which every one has to suffer," and others still, "It is the way one gets the upper hand and proves one's importance." And all of them fit in their experiences to their style of life and to their goal of safety and superiority.

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There are other influences at work which are qualifying the later development of sexuality. Most important of these, perhaps, is the expression of affection in the family. A child who is kissed and fondled and who trains himself to get his own way by demonstrations of affection will expect the same kind of demonstration in his adult love-life. A child who is interested in his own body and in his physical sensations is training himself for sensualism in later life. On the other hand, a child who is never given caresses will not expect them from his partner in love and will be puzzled or irritated if he receives them; and a child who objects to kisses and fights against them—he may, for example, have felt that they were always used to get something out of him—will continue his protest when the circumstances are by no means similar. In this respect, of course, it is especially important how boys are treated by their mothers and girls by their fathers. Such expressions of affection are not primarily sexual but they become interwoven with the sexual expectations in adult life. It will be clear that many difficulties may arise between partners whose sexuality has been trained along quite different lines; and the difficulties will very often be misunderstood. It will be clear, also, that some children may receive from their earliest years a stimulus to develop towards homosexuality or towards other perversions. They will never develop in this way unless they misinterpret the situation; a girl may think, for example, that she can receive tenderness only from a woman; but misinterpretations of this sort may be made painfully easy. It will depend, moreover, on the general goal of superiority how far these experiences will be misinterpreted. A girl who is friendly and confident with the other sex and looks forward happily to love and marriage could never be diverted from her goal by the fact that her mother was more

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demonstrative than her father. She will make out of her experiences exactly what helps her to fulfil her goal. We should say, also, that any faults or idiosyncrasies in the training of sexuality can always be corrected; but only if they are understood and not attributed to "inborn" differences or inescapable compulsions from the environment. Many people think of their sexuality, "I can't help it; that is how I am made," and so adjustment becomes difficult or impossible for them.

We should not make the mistake of thinking that the "passive" saint is a weak character and the "active" Don Juan a strong one. Indeed we often see men who are energetic and successful in their approach to other problems taking up an attitude of refusal to sexual activity; and we as frequently see men who stake all their self-esteem on their sexual activity and avoid the problems of occupation and friendship. In his childhood the saint felt inadequate to the masculine rôle and he compensated and perhaps overcompensated by establishing as his personality ideal the goal of being the "wisest" man or the "strongest" man. In this goal the other sex played no part. He avoided situations in which his goal would be endangered and he thought of sexual activity as a distraction from his aims; but within his limited field he was often capable of high achievements. Many of the world's great philosophers and artists have lived the life of ascetics and yet have contributed greatly, in their own direction, to the eternal values of mankind. In a similar way we often find athletes who, during the period of training or even through the whole of their lives, keep to a strict asceticism. In their eagerness to achieve their goal of being the "strongest" they go beyond the demands of common sense; but they are afraid that if they admitted other interests they would be distracted from

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their main purpose. They concentrate in much the same way as a man may do who has an important engagement in half an hour and can attempt no work because he must be looking at his watch every half minute. A Don Juan also suffered from feelings of inferiority on the score of his "manhood" when he was a child; but he concentrated on assuring himself that he was a man after all. The one point for which he was watching was the proof of his masculinity; and what else could he do but collect as many scalps as possible? In his spare time he might go ahead with his professional problem; but this task would always be subordinated to his main interest and even if he made money or achieved fame his aim would be to secure an additional advantage in sexual competition.

There are women saints and women Don Juans; and the two sexes are much the same in their approach to the problem of sex. Yet here we discover an enigma; until quite recently, and in countless instances even to-day, women who strove to become wives and mothers were still inclined to be saints, and where they could not, if they were to keep their goal and personality ideal, avoid sexual life, they still succeeded in avoiding sexual feelings. How did this happen? Do we find an instance here where the goal in life, for once, fails to stir up the feelings appropriate to its achievement? By no means; their goal still dominated their style of life; their feelings were in perfect accordance with their personality ideals. To understand the paradox, however, we must again consider how the behaviour of one sex is conditioned by the demands of the other.

Under a patriarchal culture most men, in their own sexual training, imagined that women were divided into two groups; they saw them either as prostitutes or as Madonnas. With the prostitute sexual life was to be taken easily and enjoyed;

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men paid for what they wanted and there could be little cause for inferiority feelings on their part. The Madonna, on the other hand, was worshipped and admired as the mother-to-be; she was pure and chaste; until she became a mother she was supposed to be a virgin; she remained faithful to her husband, and the guarantee of her faithfulness was that she took no interest in sexual enjoyment at all. How could a "decent" woman, with these two paths before her, do anything but choose the part of the mother and Madonna?

The Christian churches made this separation still stronger. The lusts of the body were condemned as sins and intercourse was permitted only in the marriage relationship and only for the procreation of children. A man's choice in establishing a home was not so much directed by sexual attraction and love as by the judgment that a woman would or would not make a good mother for his children. If he looked for sexual pleasures, he felt that he must look outside of his home; for if his wife found a pleasure in their own sexual relationships might she not also be capable of finding the same pleasure with another man? Frigidity in women was thus felt to be a guarantee of faithfulness and decency.

The women trained to be mothers and housewives of course trained their sons and daughters in the same attitude. Girls were trained for their future duties, and in so far as they were given any understanding of sexual intercourse they were led to believe it a necessary evil of married life, which they should suffer in patience. They gathered, also, that the woman, in allowing intercourse, was making a gift to her husband for which he should be grateful. Every time she permitted his approaches she was sacrificing herself to her husband's unfortunate lack of restraint. How could it be otherwise? If she was really not prepared to co-operate in sexual life, it did



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look as if she was conferring a favour and the man was receiving it. From this situation she obtained a feeling of power. In all other respects she felt subordinated to the man; but here, at least, she had the final word. If a man was temperamental and demanded these favours of his wife very often, she gained much sympathy from her friends. It was really too sad, the way men were unable to control their lower natures.

Because of the special inability of men to rise to higher things, it was supposed that they were polygamous by nature. Now a polygamous attitude is not a physiological fact; there is no polygamous "instinct" in men, any more than there is a 'monogamous' instinct. Both are the result of training carried on from the earliest years of life. It did seem, however, because their training had diverged, that women were less polygamous or promiscuous than men. If they were monogamous, however, it was not a result of their natures. If they had allowed themselves more sexual freedom, they would have run very grave risks. We must remember that in those days a widow might find a second husband but no one was willing to ally himself in marriage to a divorced woman or an unmarried woman who was known to have had previous love experiences. The danger of pregnancy also influenced the attitude of women; for a woman saddled with an illegitimate child was in a situation of great disadvantage. Here at least a matrilinear attitude persisted; an illegitimate child was the woman's and not the man's and it was not even entitled to its father's name. Times have changed and women have more freedom. The knowledge of birth control has worked wonders with the physiology of women and in many instances has changed a monogamous instinct into a polygamous instinct! In reality, however, the women who

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turn birth control into an excuse for repeated love affairs serve only to show us that even before birth control there must have been many women who were only monogamous by *force majeure*.

If it was thought that men were naturally polygamous, women had to accept extra-marital relationships on the part of their husbands; and indeed it was generally true that unfaithfulness was sufficient ground for a husband to get a divorce, but not for a wife. Yet if women had always to admit that it was part of man's nature that his sexual interests should roam, what stimulus had they to adapt their sexuality to their husbands? Whatever they did he might go off elsewhere at any moment. The only effectual defence lay in the *sour grapes* theory. They pretended to have no interest in sexual activity and they pretended so successfully that they actually lost all interest in it. So they contrived to protect themselves against the possibility of defeat.

Girls who resisted more openly against the fate of being a woman would sometimes become Messalinas. They made it their aim to attract as many men as they could and to defeat them by losing interest as soon as they felt they had conquered. To change from lover to lover is not in the slightest, as it is often thought, the sign of a "warm temperament"; and many of these women remained frigid through all their love affairs. It is a mistake to call women who try to make their way through life by means of their sexual attraction "oversexed"; they are ambitious women who have not enough self-confidence to succeed in more useful ways.

Another escape from normal sexual life is homosexuality. In the homosexual attitude we see a fear of the other sex combined with a wish to preserve the appearance of having strong sexual promptings. Demonstrative friendship amongst girls

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is often interpreted as homosexuality; and indeed it may be the foundation for a homosexual style of life if no bridge is made to the other sex. Whether these tendencies may properly be called homosexual or not, they need not be taken too seriously amongst adolescent girls. Each of them can be led back to normality if she finds the right encouragement. It is amongst adults that homosexuality represents the strongest challenge to society. Some women take to homosexual relationships after experiencing a disappointment in a normal love affair; and thus reveal very clearly the discouragement and the protest against their position underlying the attitude of all homosexuals. The purpose of homosexuality is to find an easy way to satisfy sexual impulses without the risk of defeat or the assumption of responsibility.

We should mention for the sake of completeness the other sexual perversions, though we are dealing throughout the book with the woman's approach to life within the limits of normality. Every perversion or fetichism expresses a deep discouragement combined with a tendency to depreciate the sexual partner or the other sex altogether. They reveal a training to depend on a mechanism for sexual satisfaction instead of co-operating in affection and intimacy or to show oneself content with a detail of the partner's body, dress or property instead of considering his whole personality. Masochism is the most concentrated expression of the desire to dominate by passivity, to rule by submitting; and sadism is the open wish to have one's superiority admitted or to prove one's strength at the expense of others. Both attitudes, of course, point to a profound inferiority complex and both imply in women a strong protest against the feminine rôle.

That the Madonna-prostitute division is not a characteristic of bygone days only can be shown by innumerable instances.

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One illustration shall serve for many. A man in his forties was speaking before others of his marriage. He had nothing but praise for his wife. He had been married for seven years; there was a child of five; and he asserted that no one understood him so well or was half as good a friend to him as his wife. There was nothing in the world which he would not share with her and no subject on which he would not ask her advice before acting. The longer he spoke the more conspicuous he made himself. There must be something wrong, one felt. Nobody can be married to a goddess without resenting it. Finally, he spoke of their sexual relations. With pride in his voice he acknowledged that since the child was born they had never had any sexual intercourse. He could never bear, he explained, to put his wife into the same situation as all the prostitutes and chorus girls with whom he had amused himself before his marriage.

Men with such an attitude are becoming rarer, but there are still far more of them than a casual observer might imagine. Even now if a man is so bothered about his partner's lack of sexual enjoyment that he seeks advice about it, the odds are ten to one that he is unmarried. He is bothered then through his fear of losing her. The moment they are married, however, he feels safe; his concern over the difficulty is gone and it would cost him too much trouble to do anything about it. Some men still feel, perhaps unadmittedly, that a woman who enjoys marital intercourse is in the grip of her passions and might easily look to satisfy them elsewhere too. There are still men who, during the period of their engagement, will make love to their fiancées, pet them and caress them, and then go elsewhere to satisfy the sexual impulses they have stirred up. They do not think whether their fiancées also have been sexually excited. One man engaged himself to a

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girl of good family and upbringing. On one occasion (or perhaps more) they had sexual relations and the girl became pregnant. The man broke off the engagement. Both the girl herself and her parents begged him to continue the engagement and marry her, but he refused outright. He was impertinent enough to say that no one could expect him to marry a girl who had sexual relations outside of marriage. We can see, of course, behind his attitude strong feelings of inferiority. If the girl had relations with him, he considered, she might just as easily have them with anybody else. So small was the degree of his self-confidence and trust in his ability to make himself loved.

Women whose sexual life in their marriage is unsatisfactory are often under considerable tension. Some keep the hope that next time it will be better and each new occasion is a new disappointment. Others look forward with fear to every approach from their husbands. The effect of the tension will be visible in their daily lives. It would not be fair to put the blame on the shoulders of men without giving the same responsibility to women. A woman may take the initiative in improving sexual relations as well as a man. There is another responsibility also which women must bear. These men derived their attitude from their childhood experiences and the morals they drew from them. They were trained by mothers; and their mothers left them with the idea that sex was something furtive or forbidden, or something beyond the interests of a decent woman. In their childhood they were already preparing the attitude that if they could not master their sexual impulses they should get rid of them in the easiest way. People who are now in their thirties or forties were brought up with the idea that no man is worthy of a good woman, and that a woman who even begins a sexual rela-

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tionship outside of marriage has lost all claim to be considered decent. They were trained to think that women do not need sexual satisfaction and many of them do not even know what sexual satisfaction for a woman is. They were trained to believe that a woman's sexuality is awakened with her first intercourse and they often do not realize that petting and love-making affect a woman at all. So much importance was placed on this first intercourse that many men still feel they have not secured their Madonna unless their wife comes to them as a virgin. We do not need to expatiate on this mistake. Many women who have sedulously preserved their hymen are far more dissolute than others who have had intercourse with several men.

Is it true that the first intercourse of a woman affects her whole future attitude to sex? Beyond a doubt, no. That attitude was being prepared through her whole life and intercourse is only a step in the realization of the problem of love. Even her reaction to her first intercourse a woman, to a large extent, brings with her. She has looked forward to it with fear or with high expectations. Her phantasy has been nourished by books and by the stories of more experienced friends. Her sexual activity has so far consisted in kissing, love-making and erotic dreams and conversations. Sometimes she was able to satisfy her sexual wishes by these means even to the point of an orgasm. If this was true how much she must demand from intercourse itself and how disappointed she will be! All these facts help to explain how it happens that there is scarcely a woman who obtains satisfaction from her first intercourse. The pain of defloration is in normal cases very slight and is forgotten by the next morning. It is necessary, however, for the man to show a certain skill if he is not to accentuate his partner's fears.

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The girl is in any case anxious and ready to escape if anything goes wrong. If her partner is not tactful, if he is even brutal and rough, she may take it as a personal defeat. She probably does not realize that he is as self-conscious as she. As in everything too much and too little are both of them faults. If the man is so self-conscious and embarrassed that he does not approach his wife at the fitting moment and in the fitting way she may grow discouraged and feel refused. If there are courage and common sense there will be no lasting damage, whatever happens; but if, as may often happen, the woman's preparation has left her very nervous and with a very low self-estimate, the slightest deviation from her expectations may seem to her a severe and final blow. Cases in which the man jumps at his wife and frightens her during the first night are so well known that it is not necessary to repeat any of them. Women who relate these experiences, of course, do not always tell us the objective truth; their fear of intercourse and of marital life makes them exaggerate the inconsiderateness and impatience of their husbands. But there are cases much more rarely heard of though perhaps no less frequent, where, on the night when she feels prepared "to give everything," a woman feels herself neglected or insufficiently loved. One woman of fifty had never forgotten, after twenty-two years of married life, that her husband hesitated to come to bed for several hours on the wedding night. He sat by the window smoking cigarette after cigarette. His wife never understood that he had been embarrassed and afraid that he would not be able to fulfill her expectations. She did not see that he had been collecting his courage. She saw only that he had not shown himself sufficiently attracted to forget his hesitation. And of course she was right; her husband was at fault; but it was surely a fault she could have forgiven him in twenty-two years.

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Another instance will show the same feelings of neglect in a still higher degree. A woman of forty-two suffered from melancholia. Her depression had started a few days after her marriage. She related that she had always been unlucky in love affairs and could never find a husband by herself. A friend, therefore, introduced her to a man she thought would make a suitable husband. He was very short-sighted, indeed, almost blind, but he could make a fair livelihood as a labourer. After a few weeks they decided to marry. Once during the engagement her fiancé approached her but she refused intercourse. He made no other attempt. Her depression consisted of crying spells and the first occurred at the wedding dinner. She explained that the bridegroom paid more attention to the other guests than to her. The wedding night came but the husband made no approaches. For eight nights the same thing happened and she spent the eight nights in tears. At last the husband asked her why she was crying; she explained and the marriage was consummated. There can be no doubt that this was a battle for prestige. The husband's pride had been hurt by the refusal before the marriage and he had turned the tables by making no approaches afterwards. She, for her part, claimed that she never had any sexual desires; but we can see that her prestige was injured by the fact that the husband did not want her. It will not be astonishing to learn that this was the same woman as the girl of twenty-two we described in the chapter on adolescence: the peasant girl who remained ignorant till that age of any of the facts of sex.

It has been supposed that the first experience of sexual activity may change a girl because she feels afterwards that she is "mature," that she has become a woman, is more adequate to life and has a higher value. This is perhaps more often true of marriage itself than of sexual intercourse; and especially



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when marriage guarantees a certain economic security and social position. Here also we must say, however, that a girl will not feel more self-confident and responsible after marriage unless she is prepared to interpret the situation in that way, and girls who fear marriage may have their feeling of inferiority and inadequacy stressed when they marry, feel more burdened with their tasks and even suffer "nervous breakdowns." A new situation never changes the character, though it may reveal new possibilities or impose a new strain.

We have spoken so far of married women and their response to their first sexual intercourse. But suppose the first intercourse occurs outside of marriage? Is there more embarrassment or less? To tell the truth, it is usually less. The expectations are not so much heightened; they are not concentrated on one particular day; and it seems that less is involved in failure or success. Other factors exist, however, which may increase the tension; there is the fear of detection, of loss of reputation, perhaps of pregnancy. And there is scarcely a girl in these circumstances who is not wondering what the man thinks of her; scarcely a girl, indeed, who does not ask him afterwards, "I suppose you don't respect me any longer?" There is the fear that the man does not value highly enough the gift she had made to him. She feels that social pressure against her action is strong and she half believes that the man is entitled to change his opinion of her. Many girls in such circumstances say no not through any lack of desire, but because they wish to keep the man's good opinion. And immediately such a consideration occurs to them they are right, for it is true that many men lose their interest in a woman who has said yes.

In every instance we have been able to see that sexuality and sexual adaptation have nothing to do with physiology but

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depend on the attitudes of individuals and of society on the whole. It is the relation between the man and the woman, the relation between them as human beings, which holds the determining place. We end, therefore, where we began. Sexual relations are not purely private affairs; they are the concern of the whole of society and they involve social relationships. The foundation for a good adaptation must be the ability to live in comradeship and equality with one member of the other sex.

## CHAPTER VI

### *The Married Woman*

WE have followed the course that women take as far as the time of marriage, or, rather, we have seen the course they follow either towards marriage or away from it. Not all the paths that lead to marriage are, however, the right ones: we have already seen enough to understand the underlying motives for a wrong approach and to understand what a right approach would be. It is always the unpalatable task of a psychologist or a doctor to point out mistakes, in order to help. We can only learn, indeed, from the mistakes that we have made ourselves or have seen others make.

Every one of the types of women we are going to consider now has its counterpart in men: it would be a helpful, indeed, an invaluable task if some other investigator would draw up a comparative study of men in the same way. Observations on the one partner in any relationship so close as that of the two sexes, and especially in marriage, are bound to be incomplete and open to misinterpretation. Wherever possible, therefore, we shall refer to men as well as to women, though it is not permitted to us to draw conclusions about men in the same way as we do about women, since the author's clinical experience has included more women than men.

In marital relationships, the attitude of the one partner always depends on the attitude of the other partner to a very high degree: the same individual might behave quite

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differently towards another partner. Yet the fact that an individual has chosen a certain partner, even though the choice turns out to be a wrong one, enables us to conclude that the particular partner chosen was essential in order that the individual might obtain his goal of superiority. For instance, a passive person rarely chooses a passive partner and should such a choice be made the marriage will not be successful.

In order to understand fully the behaviour of the various types of women in marriage the easiest way to begin is to turn back for a moment to the diagram on page 29 in which we see individuals striving towards their superiority-goals, more or less stressing active or passive means. The first group to consider are the passive women.

Passive women will attempt to reach their goal of superiority by blind submission. In doing so, they will never be responsible for anything which happens in the marriage, because they have only obeyed their husband's orders. It was he who was responsible. In this way they save their superiority, because they run no risk of defeat. Our knowledge enables us to guess what sort of children these women were. They were the pampered children, always the centre of attention, the model children. Blindly accepting the authority of their parents, they never did anything on their own account, and therefore never failed. They transfer authority now to their husbands. They will never make an independent decision, will consult "the master" about every trifle. At the beginning, the husband is much impressed by so much submissiveness, so much admiration on the part of his wife, and gets a great thrill out of the protective power which he exercises. In time, however, he feels his wife's dependence as a burden and realizes that he has lost control over his own life. If he tries to loosen the bond, even only a little, his wife will respond

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just as she did if her mother wanted to go out at night. She will not resist openly, but she will cry, or she will be afraid something terrible is going to happen. Such women have fits of anxiety if their husbands or children do not come home at exactly the moment they are expected, so that they are all placed under an immense obligation never to cause such anxiety. There is not much difference between a child who is afraid of the dark the moment it is left alone, who throws itself into a passion of terror because its mother may be run over by a car if she goes out in the evening, and the woman who suffers tortures if her husband is at his club and is terrified of an accident if he is taking part in athletics or sports. When he does come home, she will keep talking about how frightened she has been, how relieved she is that no disaster actually occurred. In this way, she often succeeds in ruining any pleasure her husband might have in physical activity or in any interest that takes him away from her for an hour or two. He may be so grateful for her devotion that he fails to see that he is a victim of her wish to dominate. But there are husbands who see through the devotion and continuous quarrels are the result. The woman at once deceives and justifies herself by her fears, cannot understand why her husband fails to appreciate her thoughtfulness. She may succeed in making her husband thoroughly self-conscious and nervous: and, of course, if anything does ever go wrong she will claim that she was clairvoyant all along. But if her husband tries to resist her, then she will respond with all the nervous symptoms she found successful in like circumstances in her childhood. She will lose her appetite, she will cry and have terrors if left alone. She will look drawn and pale, her sleep will be broken. In a word, she will show all the signs of a pampered child, just like all those people who have not learned to

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stand on their own feet. We might quote, as an illustration of this general tendency, a young woman who could not fall asleep unless she were holding her husband's hand. The slightest movement on his part woke her at once. What better control could she have devised over him than this? Another woman who dominated her family in the way described above—mother of four grown-up and married children—came home one afternoon and related how she had been forced to walk for an hour all by herself to get to a certain place. When asked why she had not taken a tram or a taxi, she replied that the trams were crowded and that she could not take a taxi because she had never in her life been alone in a taxi and how could she possibly talk to a taxi-driver? She did not complain, did not reproach her husband or her children, but she was fairly certain that another time one member of the family or another would look after her and see that she was not confronted with such a dilemma again.

These women who get the upper hand over the families by weakness always make a great business of any little illness or physical discomfort and thereby force every one in the house to give in to them. There are women who easily get headaches, or stomach troubles, or an increase of blood pressure, though for no pathological reason. They answer any difficult situation with such symptoms, though the most careful physical examination could find nothing wrong with them. Others are absolutely in need of a nap in the afternoons and the whole household must keep quiet at that time. There is no greater pretension than that of the person who asks nothing more than "peace." What does such a person really mean? Only that, in order to guarantee this "peace," every other member of the family must submissively contrive to cancel his own activities to preserve this perfect rest and quiet. There

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are others who simply say they feel weak: there is nothing to be done about this, for who can prove the contrary? That even a real *migraine* is not an organic disease many physicians, such as Adler and Crookshank, have lately proved. We cannot, for lack of space here, digress to explain how these migraines develop but will say simply that they are nothing more or less than suppressed fits of rage. Upon analysis, the reason for these fits can be found and it proves that they occur only after the individual suffering from them has somehow experienced a feeling of defeat which makes him feel powerless. These domineering people cannot bear to be in the wrong or to feel powerless and they answer any such situation with a fit of headache.

There are women who, by such means, escape from their household duties. Housework is nowadays considered an occupation of minor worth and some women feel humiliated if they are forced to do it. The fate and the future of a marriage can often depend on such trifles. We call them trifles, for no individual who is really sure of his own worth can ever feel humiliated by any kind of work he or she does. Only those who doubt their own worth will need proofs that they are of importance and will refuse any work which they think endangers this importance. The lengths to which such a feeling of inferiority can go is well illustrated in the following instance. A woman who had been married for over twenty years had never been able to forget that the night after the wedding, when she cleaned their apartment, her husband made no attempt to help her. She scrubbed the floor four times over and still her idle husband did not come to the rescue. She could not understand that the man had quite failed to see what a sacrifice she made in starting her sexual life with such a gesture—a gesture, incidentally, that was

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perfectly unnecessary, except that it provided her with an attempt to try to win appreciation.

Women like these never resist their husbands openly but they have one great weapon in their sex-life. Most of them are frigid. Here at least they have the upper hand. If the husband is the least considerate, then he must feel a necessity to increase his attentions in other respects to make up for his inadequacy on this point. In sum, these passive women who seem so submissive are really much stronger than a woman who rises in open revolt. They have no responsibility for anything and seem like the angels their husbands want them to be. They get every possible consideration and give nothing in return but weakness. How such a woman can achieve her goal of superiority is shown in the following case.

A woman of thirty-two who had been married for some years, had two children. She was always very submissive to her husband and had done the housework gladly until the children came along. Then she was unable to run her home at all but spent all the day at her mother's house, an hour's ride away from where she lived. She was too feeble to do anything but accept her husband's attentions. After six in the evening, when her husband came home from the office, she was all right. But it happened that her husband went out alone one evening, and on his return found her asleep in the same chair she had been sitting in when he went out. She had not been able to make up her mind to go to bed and so the husband could never go out because he feared she would not go to bed. When they were to play bridge she became alert and interested. There she could think clearly and independently. Her greatest wish was to send her children to boarding school, give up the house and go to live in a hotel, free from responsibility. How had this state of mind arisen? She was the oldest of



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several children and at home had felt neglected by comparison with the younger ones. She married fairly early and had a lovely time when she was the sole interest of her husband. The first child arrived and she could manage the household without great effort, though she was unusually concerned over the health of the child. When the second child came and she saw her husband's interest and affection turning towards the children, she began to feel neglected again. Housework she thought beneath her, though so long as it helped to win her the undivided appreciation of her husband, she liked to do it. But when she had the two children, not only had she to give up something of her husband's attention but the fulfilment of some of her wishes, since their income did not keep pace with the increased demands of the larger household. Open revolt was not in her line. Instead, she began to worry terribly about everything and had to be released from her duties. Meanwhile, her brothers and sisters had married, so now she could have the undivided attention of her mother. She became a pitiful cry-baby again. Every one did what she wanted. She lost all interest in dress and her husband had to force her to buy anything she needed. We frequently meet such an attitude among people, who refuse everything because they cannot have all they want, and this case is really most instructive. She tried to get her way all along by weakness. As an oldest child, she had the strong wish to possess somebody as she had once possessed her mother. With the birth of her own children, possession was endangered and the only way to achieve it was by being weaker than her little ones. The children could be looked after by a maid but she had to be nursed by her husband: by her attitude, she unconsciously proved what an impossible burden it would be for her to have a third child.

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What strength such a person must have to be willing to pay so high a price to satisfy her superiority-goal! She made her goal concrete by the wish to have one person in her life who paid her undivided attention. The method she chose was for the moment successful, though in time who knows if the husband would not have tired of the great strain put on him? But people who are discouraged cannot wait for the fulfilment of their wishes; they want immediate results. She did not wait until her children had grown to recover the undivided attention of her husband; she wanted it at once. She did not realize that she forced him to pay even more attention to the children, since she paid them none. All she saw was that they got more than she did.

A woman of this kind will always feel hurt if any one else comes into the picture but herself and the husband. She had never been trained in independence; her whole energy was used to cling to some one and keep him. The feeling of deprivation suppresses all social feeling and the great hallmark of her kind is an incredible egocentricity.

Other women of the same type seek to impress the partner by other means. They are just as ambitious and use weakness as a weapon in the same way. One suffers from migraine, another from insomnia. The moment we find a woman suffering from one of the great variety of nervous symptoms we can be sure all is not well with her marriage, even though it may seem to be happy. Let us consider another case.

A woman of thirty-four, married for fifteen years, with two children, suffered from a nervous tremor of the hands. The most careful examination, frequently repeated, could discover nothing wrong with her organically. It was easy to see she was not happy. The strain she was under showed in her face; she looked worried and depressed. She had complained

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of the tremor from the first day she was married. When asked if she was happy in her marriage, she replied "Our marriage is considered the happiest one among all our friends." This answer showed clearly, first, that she was not happy; second, that she wanted to give the impression that she was not happy without saying it. In the way she spoke about her marriage it was evident that she had submitted herself absolutely to her husband and had made herself a slave to him. She accepted his every demand and blindly carried out all his wishes. In fifteen years she had never talked back at him or contradicted him. Not even an angel could have borne such a life: it was quite sufficient to explain her nervous tension. When her goal in life had been discovered, it was easy to understand her attitude. The motto of her whole life had been "Keep up appearances." Even as a girl she had been a model child; she never contradicted her parents, was always dignified and assumed responsibility for the whole family, being the oldest of five. It is never an accident that oldest children have a great feeling for responsibility and for justice. They try to regain their lost kingdom by being model children, submitting themselves absolutely and regarding authority as sacred. Respect for the authority of others has a very egotistic background. If an individual respects the authority of others, hasn't he a claim to the same respect? Have they not a right to expect others to regard them as authorities, since they are the oldest and after the parents the most deserving of respect?

Even as a child she strictly obeyed every order and her wish to keep up appearances showed clearly; even when she secretly disapproved, she did not allow herself to show it. She married a man she did not love because her parents wished it. She tried to make up for this injustice to her husband by at least appearing to be happy. The tremor was the result. In

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the course of treatment she understood how she had repeated the same pattern of life since childhood and that actually it would not destroy the happiness of marriage if a wife should, for once, say what she thought in an agreeable fashion, even though it did not meet with her husband's approval. It was quite dramatic to watch the result. One day she did not agree with a wish that her husband expressed and told him very calmly that she was of a different opinion. She described this as if she had not thought she was capable of doing such a thing and had been very frightened of doing it. Her husband, however, had accepted her opinion because she was right: and she felt "new-born." She had never been so happy in her whole life as after this occurrence and from that time turned into a clever and charming companion to her husband. The tremor vanished that very day.

Both the cases already cited show a striving for the goal of superiority by similar means: the one grew depressed, the other had a tremor: both avoided open revolt against an unwelcome fate. The first case in especial showed how powerful people can be, how energetic, although they are playing the rôle of a helpless infant. The strongest person in the world is a baby, because nobody expects anything from him and everybody gives freely to him.

Other women of this kind have another means of power over their husbands. Overstressing their own weakness, they so much admire everything that the husband does that they greatly burden him with expectations of further success. They can hamper him greatly unless he is a most courageous sort of person, by urging him on in this indirect way. If he is not successful, they will accuse others of having hindered him, and in this way isolate him more and make him more closely bound to themselves, getting more and more power over him.

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At the opposite side of the picture are the active women who try to reach their superiority-goal and get the upper hand in marriage not by tears and weakness but by argument. They will not conceal their wish to dominate. Even the choice of partner shows the low degree of courage and self-confidence these women have. Sometimes the partner's external appearance already guarantees her the upper hand. He will be a weakling or a cripple, so that he must always be grateful she accepted him. The wish to dominate is often hidden behind a pretence of pity and motherliness on the part of such women. Others choose a man from a lower social position than themselves, or one who is economically worse off than they, or one who is much younger. Even if the partner seems to promise none of these securities for her domination, the wish to rule will soon show itself. If there is an argument she will want the last word, she will have a fit of rage the moment her husband makes the slightest sign of independence: if she has no logical reason for proving herself in the right, she will make him feel more or less directly how she has sacrificed herself by marrying him—a physically weak, or poor or inferior man like himself. She will complain that she has come down in the world: or if there is no other reproach, she will complain that she has given so much by giving herself and he appreciates her insufficiently. She will set herself up for an authority in all sorts of ways, will keep a sharp look-out for any little deviation from etiquette on the part of the husband. Such women will be sticklers for etiquette in every way. To show their importance in the home, they will make the home into a hell when the house is cleaned: they will use punctuality as a terrible weapon. They will not bother to hide their sensibility behind fear, as the other type of woman does. Everybody must always be on time. During meals they

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will nag at the husband, and if, later, both husband and children try to be out of the house as much as possible, they will be bitterly offended, though by nagging and criticizing it is they themselves who have driven their family to prefer spending their time elsewhere. Such women are terribly jealous, not out of love—for jealousy is never a sign of love—but out of the striving for domination.

They are also very ambitious for their husbands—they could not tolerate a husband who was a failure—but their greatest ambition of all is the wish to have a recognized position in the home. They would never allow any one to think that their husbands had a word in any matter. Of course this great desire to prove that they have the upper hand is a proof that they fear they have not got the upper hand at all, that they are not the most important person at all. The author had an amusing experience with this sort of woman upon the occasion of a lecture given to a group of some one hundred and fifty women. The president of the club was a very forceful and energetic person, from whose appearance one might have guessed that her husband would not have much sway in the home. The topic of the lecture touched on the bad effect it has on the child if one member in a family has a dominant position. As an illustration, it was mentioned that the man usually takes this privileged position. The president rose and in a very challenging voice asked, "Has any one in America ever seen a man take up a domineering attitude at home?" As she put the question, there peeped from behind a curtain at the back of the room the face of a man who, it turned out afterwards, was this woman's husband. The rather malicious answer given to her question by the author was "If you were quite sure there were no such men, perhaps you would not have asked the question." It was undoubtedly true that this

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woman, as president of the club, was most anxious that it should not appear in even the most impersonal and abstract way that she would ever give in to her husband.

In all these cases the problem is really taken to be "Who will give in?" instead of "How can we work best together?" This woman was afraid of losing her prestige and reputation among her fellow members if she did not, plainly, play the chief rôle at home.

As we have already said, such women are very jealous and sometimes kill their husbands' affection by nagging and by harassing them with questions. Not the husband only but the children too may have this to put up with. These women do not restrain themselves in the presence of the children, and the children are consequently made witnesses to—sometimes judges of—quarrels. We need hardly be astonished that sons and daughters get a wrong opinion of marriage and their own place in the world in such cases.

Such women have many outside activities and little interest for what goes on in the home. If they are able, they keep nurses and governesses for the children or send them off to boarding school: if not, they neglect the children and go out as much as possible. Many of them consider housework humiliating and are always in rather a disagreeable mood when they are in the house. Outside they may be charming, fascinating and friendly with everybody. Is this then an ambivalence of character? It is not. It is an attempt to reach the same goal by two different methods, not two contradictory courses of conduct. In public, they try to gain people over and to play an important rôle by kindness. At home, they do not need to curb themselves, they are openly masterful. They are never satisfied, they belittle every effort made by husband or children. They will even resent their

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children getting a better education than they did and will keep the children in subjection as long as possible. Their ambition for their husbands is great but actually achieves the opposite result, since the husbands feel inferior and this has its effects outside the home as well as in it.

Another kind of woman will try to appear always as a victim of circumstances. She will pretend that she married to save her family from financial ruin, to save the husband from suicide or something of the sort. She will always keep in mind an idealized picture of some other man with whom the husband is constantly compared, to his discredit. She will even speak openly on this topic. She will always be reproaching her husband that he has given her such a bad time, such a hard life, and insist how many other men would have been only too happy if she had accepted them. These women will always lament their cruel fate, claim that they deserved better. They are generally frigid and will let their husbands know it. At first they will pretend to be ardent, but later they grow tired of the effort and let their husbands know the truth. "It was always pretence," they say. This is the final victory, because it makes the husband so self-conscious. He will never know if they have told the truth on this subject or not, or how they will act in the future. A tension arises here and the husband's pride is profoundly injured.

The following case depicts such a woman. A woman of twenty-two married a man six years older. Unhappily he was not entirely cured of gonorrhea and she caught it. She was the youngest in her family, very spoiled and dependent on her mother. The disease became a matter for concern and discussion to the whole family and the husband was condemned by every one. This woman had been brought up isolated from every outside contact and was completely



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without any knowledge of sex when she married. She was very awkward in looking after herself and could not apply the necessary treatment. The husband, therefore, was called in to help. His offer to pay for a nurse was not accepted—he had to be punished for his crime. It is true enough that his carelessness was to blame, but before the War there was little enough of hygiene known to ordinary people. As in most illnesses, here too, as soon as there were not obvious symptoms, people thought themselves cured and any suggestion of further treatment only a caprice on the part of the doctor and a means for him to make money. There are people to-day who still behave like this. In the end, the attitude on the part of his wife resulted in this man's becoming impotent, and the whole family and gradually a wider and wider circle of friends made jokes about him and made him ridiculous. For twenty-seven years of their married life until the woman died, the husband was reminded every single day how he had wrecked her life and how much she was to be pitied. Misfortunes of this kind are not unheard of: the woman was free to apply for divorce and there were no children to consider. But when she decided not to do that, she took advantage of him and of his misfortune and tried to get the best of it by making him into a fool in every one's eyes. He was a quiet, kindly man who loved his wife, but as he, too, had to compensate for his feeling of defeat caused by her attitude, he escaped into impotence.

We cannot forget that there are a great many women who suffer much in their marriages, and without complaint. They stick to the task they have started, even if they do not make the right solution. We must always remember that in marriage it is never one partner alone who is responsible if things go wrong, but always both of them: sometimes one is more to

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blame than the other but we can never put the whole responsibility on one partner alone. By making a choice of partner in the beginning each person puts himself under an obligation to that partner, though every one actually tries to excuse himself by putting the responsibility on the other. Women who take up the attitude of victims are especially adept at this.

Here is a case in which a woman found a wonderful way of deceiving herself and of justifying herself in the eyes of the world and her family. A young woman with a child was unhappily married. The husband fell in love with the younger sister of his wife. There was a divorce and the man married his sister-in-law. This marriage was not happy either. The younger sister justified herself by telling the whole family, by convincing them, that she had married her brother-in-law only to make sure that he would send the alimony to her sister and support the child. In that way, she acquired a martyr's halo for the sake of the family. Actually, she needed this justification to excuse her for having flirted with her sister's husband and for having taken away this rather weak man.

What made her do it? There had always been strong competition between the two sisters, the younger always trying to get the better of the elder. Any field of activity her sister entered, any success her sister seemed to make, provoked her to compete: and so she had to try her power also with the man her sister won.

There are women who accept the first man who proposes to them after they have met with a disappointment in love. Such a woman will also try to appear a victim, even in her own imagination: the marriage cannot but fail since there is an invisible third party always present within it. In fantasy and daydreams these women constantly picture what marriage might have been had they won the other man ; they endow

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the absent other man with all possible good qualities and virtues and by comparison with him the husband is faulty indeed. All such women are liable to frigidity.

Last we must mention the woman who marries in order to escape from the subordination of home. She, too, has the wrong attitude towards marriage: she will not find in it the freedom she looks for and is bound to be disappointed. Sometimes she will try to realize her freedom by having secret love affairs or perhaps only flirtations with other men, and in this way lives up to the personality ideal she has made for herself. The attitude of women towards their children will be discussed in another chapter.

Now is the time to describe women as we would wish them to be. It would be difficult to describe the ideal type because no type in itself can guarantee the happiness of a marriage. The type must fit a corresponding type of man. It is possible, however, to draw some general outlines. The kind of woman we should like to see more frequently is the courageous woman who does not resent her sexual rôle, who is trained to be a comrade and a companion, who is reliable in every way and who understands that nothing in the world can be perfect. She will realize that her husband has to adapt himself to her as much as she to him and that there is no need to play for position and prestige. Such an attitude is not impossible; it has often been accomplished and there are many couples who love each other and are happy together throughout life. Women like this realize that there are difficult days for the husband as well as for themselves, but they do not lose heart immediately: they wait bravely until the situation clears. Little frictions cannot be avoided but they need not be overstressed. An unconditional "Yes" towards the partner is the surest guarantee for a successful life.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Mother and Her Children*

UP to this point we have considered in what way an individual takes up his position in life during childhood, how he prepares to meet all the experiences of later life and how he suffers the results of his preparation. So far, we have regarded everything from the standpoint of the child himself. But a most important part in a child's development is played by his parents and by the way in which the child comes to regard them. It is time now that we should examine the attitude of a mother towards her children and the kind of relationship that can exist between them. This it is difficult enough to do, because of the sentimentality that surrounds the idea of motherhood. There are people who, when they come to compare their own childish experiences with those of other people, will remember their mothers happily; others will be filled with envy when they realize what they missed that others have enjoyed—but almost all, in their various ways, will entertain sentimental concepts.

In describing the various attitudes mothers take towards their children, it is necessary that we should be as free from prejudice as possible: our object is to draw conclusions as to which attitude is right and desirable. There are those who think it sacrilege to examine any maternal quality; everything to do with motherhood is sacred, beyond criticism, wholly ideal and *tabu*. Others, secretly accusing their own mothers very bitterly of all sorts of crimes, will take an equally

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irrational and useless attitude. Both sorts of people forget that mothers are human beings, like any one else, and have their own problems to work out as well as their children to care for.

It is impossible to consider the attitude of a mother towards her children unless we consider it in relation to the whole personality of that mother. We know how strongly bound up is every facet of personality with every other: and that in consequence a mother's attitude towards her children will depend entirely upon her own style of life, her own goal in life. To be a mother is a great task and by no means every one has prepared to undertake it in the best way. Many factors influence the mother-child relationship and those which we must consider as the most important are: The way in which the mother was brought up herself: her attitude towards her own sexual rôle: the way in which she herself solved the problem of love and marriage: the success or failure of her own marriage. The personal ambition of the mother, the demands she makes on life, will influence to an enormous extent her relationship with her children. Economic conditions, her own standard of living and her social status will also play a great part. Special consideration must be given to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the child, to stepchildren and to foster children.

The way in which an individual has been brought up is one of the most important factors in his whole life. If a woman was pampered in childhood, she will always try to find an equally cozy situation for herself. Since pampered children are incapable of any very great generosity, or give only as much as they calculate they can get in return, we can easily guess what kind of mother a spoilt girl will make. She will regard her children as property and will let no one else interfere with

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them. It depends entirely on the amount of social feeling such women have preserved whether they are able to establish favourable relationship with their children. Some will identify themselves so wholly with the child that they regard him as part of themselves, offering the sentimental argument that he is "theirs" since they carried him in their bodies and gave birth to him in suffering. These poetic phrases are so misleading, so strongly suggest that a child is the property of its mother even after it is born, that the women who use them as an excuse for their attitude will always claim a debt of gratitude from the child which can never be paid. A child, after all, is not responsible for having been born and has nothing to be grateful for. No one was doing him a favour. If we are to speak of gratitude at all or the duty of any child to feel or show gratitude, it can certainly only refer to the benefits a mother or a father has conferred on the living human being.

The moment a child is born he very definitely is no longer a part of his mother, certainly not her property. From the moment of birth the child belongs to society and must take his place in society in his own way. The mother has to accept the fact that the child has his own life, his own will, his own mentality. A true mother has duties but no property rights towards a child. Her contribution to society is the child himself, the greatest contribution of which any human being is capable if the child is brought up to be a useful member of society, trained and able to contribute his share. A mother who brings up her child to be an independent and responsible fellow man does not need to concern herself with property or the amount of affection the child ought to pay her when he is grown up and she is old. She will get more than she could ever expect, but without demanding it. If the child is

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regarded as her property he will never be able to show gratitude save by words.

A mother who has been a spoilt girl can take another attitude towards her child. If she is really selfish, then she will neglect her children. As long as a baby is quite tiny she may regard it as a toy, but the moment it begins to show signs of independence or wants to go its own way there will be conflict and tension, and the child will be forced into the attitude of a neglected child. Mothers like this are always on the look-out to see whether the child gets more attention from the father than she herself does: yet what could be more natural than that a child neglected by his mother should turn to his father?

Women who grew up as neglected children may have the best of intentions towards their own little ones. Resenting the treatment meted out to themselves, they are determined that their own children shall have a better fate. In consequence, they may pamper their children while endeavouring to do well by them. Others who were neglected themselves in childhood do not see why, if they themselves had a rough time of it, their own children should be treated any better: these women do not care very much for their offspring.

The attitude women take towards their own sex will influence them in wishing to have boys or girls. If they get what they want, they will be good mothers. Generally it is a boy that they want—especially for a first child—and the arrival of a child of the wrong sex can seriously affect the relationship of mother and child. The number of women who wish to have boys is far greater than one would think and gives us a good indication of the attitude all these women take towards their own sex. But even if they wish for both boys and girls, the attitude of many women towards boys and girls will be quite

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different. We have already considered this in the chapters on the Formation of Character and the Female Child. We must see now why it is that some mothers have predilections for the one or the other sex. A woman who does not rate the capacities of women highly, who has a poor opinion of woman's rôle in life, will wish for boys only. Recently, a woman who had been brought up severely, denied permission to study or even to go about freely because she was a girl, said "I want only boys. I have no use for girls." She explained her preference away by asserting that women are incapable of anything useful and that consequently she did not want to give birth to such inferior creatures. Fortunately for her and for any daughters she might have had, this woman's wish was gratified. It was unfortunate, perhaps, for the boys, and for their chances of a happy relationship with women.

Some women wish not to have daughters out of vanity. They do not want youthful rivals, more especially if they have a specific fear of growing old. There are women who will dress their daughters childishly as long as possible, so as to appear younger themselves than they are. And what woman is not delighted if some one supposes the girl at her side to be a younger sister? There are mothers who refuse to go about with adolescent daughters but are proud to be seen in the company of adolescent sons.

Some mothers wish to have girls rather than boys from a rather selfish motive. It is commonly accepted that the ties between a mother and her sons are loosened when the sons marry but that if the daughters marry those ties may be drawn closer. Such mothers see that a new family is frequently bound closely to the maternal grandparents and the maternal grandmother in especial: they hope to retain influence over their children for a far longer time if those children are girls.



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If the child is of the unwanted sex, or if a child comes at a time when it is not welcome, then the mother's relationship with her child will always be a difficult one. There are women who will try conscientiously to make reparation for the injustice they have been guilty of in their secret thoughts and who will devote themselves with all the more passion to their children. Yet they can hardly help letting their true feelings appear now and then. Children have quick ears, are very sensitive and understand far more than adults usually suppose. If the mother is not extremely clever, then the girl who ought to have been a boy, or the boy who ought to have been a girl, or the child that makes its appearance at the wrong time is apt to detect the mother's real feeling and will assume a fighting attitude towards her. It will prefer its father to her and it will quite possibly become a problem child.

The preference of a mother for one sex rather than another enables us to make many conclusions as to that mother's attitude towards her own sexual rôle. If she is really content to be a woman, she will have no such preferences. And nowadays, when girls as well as boys are able to make provision for the mother's old age by earning their own living, there is still less excuse for preferring boys on the ground that they offer a better economic security for the future.

Does the mother have favourites or does she love all her children equally? If we question her, she will seldom admit frankly that she likes one better than another. But in her inner heart she generally has a weakness for one child or another. Generally, it is the oldest or the youngest who enjoys this special affection. The oldest is best loved because it was once the only child; the bond between a mother and an only child is always close. Then mothers feel perplexed and anxious in bringing up a first child and this increases their love for it.

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The youngest child of a family is generally the most spoiled child and is regarded as "the baby" even when it is grown up. The youngest child is left for the mother to pet when the older ones have set out on their own affairs. Then, the memories a mother has of the time a child was conceived, or when it was an infant, also influence her attitude. A delicate child is often nearer a mother's heart than a healthy one; for the child that requires more care than the others is bound to her very closely, needs her constant attention, is more dependent upon her and shows more need for her love. A mother is always ready with excuses for her pet; she takes its part against the others. The privileged position the favourite holds is apt to isolate it from its brothers and sisters: it will always run to its mother in a difficulty and thus the bond is drawn ever more close. Again, the personal appearance of a child will often affect the mother-child relationship. Even with its own mother, the handsome child frequently has an easier time than the ugly one, for admiration of beauty cannot always be discounted even by maternal affection.

The results are much more considerable than we might think if the child was unwanted; and the mother's attitude to the unwanted child will always be reflected in the child's character. Whether she is severe or distant or neglectful to it, or whether she tries to make up for her real feelings by being especially good to the unwanted child, it will detect the true state of affairs and in making its defence against her the child will increase the distance between itself and the mother. It will be the same if the child is of the unwanted sex.

The relations between husband and wife often determine the mother-child relationship. If the marriage is a happy one there will be no rivalry between the parents, but the moment it is unsatisfactory the mother will often turn to the children.

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She regards them as a refuge, will devote herself entirely to them and not at all to her husband and will try—consciously or unconsciously—to win them over to her side and to get more control over them than their father has. On occasions there is evident rivalry between the parents for the affection of the children: each tries to bribe them and they are doubly spoilt. We need only consider what are the effects of the divorce laws in some countries which permit of the children's choosing with which parent they will live, as was the case in Germany before the War. It calls for little imagination to realize the resentment the rejected parent would feel towards the child, or how bitterly a mother would feel if the children elected to live with the father after a separation. It amounts to a personal defeat and the parent-child relation is forever destroyed. In cases where a mother becomes a widow, or after divorce obtains the custody of the children, then she greatly strengthens her contact with the children, and doubtless suggests just such a picture of their father to them as she wishes them to have. There are instances where a mother actually likes or dislikes a child entirely on account of its resemblance to its father. What can a child conclude when it is blamed for some fault with the words, "That's just like your father?"

Economic conditions often influence the mother-child relation. There are women who feel hampered by their children—the egotistic types. Possibly they think they conceal this feeling, but they cannot stop themselves from making remarks such as, "If you had not been born," or "If I had never married, I could have done this or that." Can a child really think himself welcome and beloved in such circumstances? Can he ever feel a proper affection for his mother? Actually, economic conditions need in no way influence the relationship,

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though they often do, for there are innumerable women who make ideal mothers though they labour under grave financial difficulties. They care for their little ones and bring them up far better, in many cases, than the affluent women who are more interested in themselves than in the family.

All mothers, even many of those who love their children but little, are ambitious for them and want them to get the best out of life. This is a natural desire; it is one of the motives that impel women to sacrifice themselves for their children and it clearly reveals the striving to "come from below to above." All mothers want their children to have a better life than they had, to achieve a higher standing along whatever path they themselves had ambitions. Maybe they themselves lacked opportunity or courage to succeed and therefore desire to give their children exactly what they lacked themselves. But the method they use is not always the right one. To fulfil a child's every wish is to make it blasé and to leave it with nothing to strive for. It is often difficult to make a mother see this when she complains that her child does not appreciate her efforts and does not wish to take advantage of the opportunities she has given him. The mother does not consider, in that case, that to burden the child with her own expectations and hopes is to hold it back rather than to inspire it. Happily, the majority are able to help their children to a higher standard of living, to fuller opportunities than they themselves enjoyed. They lead them skilfully in the direction they wish them to take until the child feels it is fulfilling its own wish and interest.

But too many mothers try to retain their influence beyond the normal time and regard their children as babies even after they are full grown and have children of their own. They interfere in the children's households and try to control all

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their actions. Sometimes the interference is concealed by apparent unselfishness, consideration and goodness, and only occasionally is the mother openly domineering.

Every one must have observed now and then mothers who show alarm at every sign of independent action on a child's part, who ruin the self-confidence and the security of their children. Many of us have known mothers who would not think of going to bed until their children have come home at night, even though they are twenty or thirty years old. They are always in terror that they will injure themselves at sports, or catch colds, or come to grief the moment they are out of sight. We have already described married women who act in this way towards their husbands as long as they are attached to them: later they transfer this attitude to their children. Innumerable children have been forced to leave home in order to enjoy their youth at all. Their mothers have then felt neglected, have complained about the ungratefulness of their children, given accounts of the many nights they have sacrificed for them, the grief and sorrow they experienced for their sakes when they were small. They cry out upon them because now, when one could really have some enjoyment in them, they leave home. It does not occur to them that a less "considerate" attitude would have kept the children happily at home. Others behave like sergeants and insist upon the strictest obedience so long as the children are in the home.

Only the other day, an elderly woman accused a young girl in the courts of having seduced her boy. At the hearing it came out that the "boy" was thirty-five years old. Such things can only happen when the mother is a masterful person who wants to retain her power as long as possible. Towards unmarried daughters these mothers will take the same attitude

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exactly. So long as they remain at home, they will watch over their morals and their private lives with an eagle eye and generally make life quite miserable for them. If a girl does not marry at the usual age we know that she was not prepared for marriage; and such a masterful mother as we are describing will check any attempt on the part of her daughter to solve the problem, even quite late in the daughter's life. In the same way, if a daughter who is widowed or divorced goes back home, though she may at the very first like being fussed over by her mother because it consoles her and makes her feel less lonely or deserted, once she recovers her spirits the "attention" of the mother will be far from welcome.

We can guess well enough to which sort of women—active or passive—such mothers belong. They are the active women who want to rule every one around them. They will always complain about the ungratefulness of their children, no matter what happens; will always talk about the sacrifices they have made and so forth. At the same time, they will never abandon the fantasy of what they might have accomplished had they not been hampered by the necessity of caring for the children.

The passive women will attempt to maintain their power and influence over the children by other means. They will always give in to them, never blame them, make the most heroic exertions for them, have no wish but to be with them. These are the women who spoil their children to an unbelievable extent. They are happy if an infant in its first attempts at speech can be understood only by themselves; sometimes in this way they provoke the child to develop a tormenting speech defect. These women will never punish a child, for fear of losing its affection, and all their lives they will be

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servants to their children. Often enough they neglect their husbands in order to devote themselves entirely to the children.

The mother of an illegitimate child is in a very difficult position. It is small wonder that among the failures in life to-day we meet a surprising number of human beings born outside wedlock. The handicap such a child lives under is only partly corrected where the mother is able to bring it up in a real home, instead of handing it over, as is generally the rule, to foster-parents or to an institution. It is a crying shame that our society to-day regards the unmarried mother as a pariah. Already enough burdened by the necessity of bringing up a child without the help of a father—a great handicap even if he contributes to its support—she deserves no further punishment. The condemnation meted out to such women is a surplus of misery we should seek to do away with by every conceivable means, for it dooms child as well as mother to untold suffering now and later. A mother must live at peace with society if she is to bring up her child so that it will not suffer in later life.

In former times, illegitimacy was by no means always a state of shame. During the Renaissance the illegitimate children and their mothers had a standing equal to that of the legitimate ones. And if we trace back the ancestry of the English and Italian aristocracy, for instance, how often we find a bar sinister at the head of proud families! The Duc de Morny, for example, illegitimate son of an illegitimate son, exercised considerable power over his half-brother, Napoleon III. Even to-day, it is impossible not to observe that the illegitimate children of distinguished people are by no means treated in the same way as those poor outcasts, the children of unmarried girls in humble circumstances. In their case, blame

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is most unjustly laid to the mothers only. The masculine culture in which we live has been responsible for laws such as those that existed in France, where any inquiry into the paternity of an illegitimate child was forbidden. And Society's attitude towards the illegitimate child and the unmarried mother has been supported strongly by those many women who, until very recently, at least, subscribed to the fiction that passion was permissible only in marriage and that even there it was somewhat below the dignity of a nice woman.

The position of a stepmother or a foster-mother is peculiar, and the stepmother's position is the more difficult of the two. The child must always feel a certain amount of prejudice against her; and because she wishes to overcome this prejudice she will put too much stress on her care and her attention. Her position towards her husband will be difficult too. Every reprimand she addresses to the child, every punishment she thinks necessary, may well be held against her and put down to the fact that the child is not her own. This is apt to make her act awkwardly and self-consciously towards the child and sometimes makes her jealous of it. There was, for instance, such a case where a widower with a child four years old married again. If the child were sitting on his knee and his wife came into the room, he put the child down at once and though he might be telling her a story, broke off in the middle of a word; this he did to prevent a jealous scene with his wife later on. Some children take advantage of father's support and make the stepmother's life unendurable. Every stepmother is apt to fear that she does not love a step child enough, especially if she has children of her own. Sometimes it is true. The tension between children and step-mother is much greater if the children are no longer quite small when the new wife enters the household. Stepmothers



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have a very bad reputation in all fairy stories and every step-mother has this fact to contend with. Her husband may even use the children as a weapon against her: she may find herself isolated by such an alliance. The best will in the world cannot help in some instances, but in others an excellent relationship between the new wife and the stepchildren springs up and is established. There are even cases in which children remain with a stepmother after a divorce and prefer to be with her rather than with their father.

Foster mothers sometimes have peculiar difficulties in adjusting themselves to children in their care. Such foster children are as a rule illegitimate, and are regarded, therefore, as coming from an "immoral" mother. The foster mother thinks it her duty to hunt out and to correct unhallowed tendencies in the child, inherited from the wicked mother, and therefore assumes a very severe attitude towards the child. She tries to repress rather than to display affection and keeps the child strictly at home in order to preserve its morals. We have mentioned that many children, influenced by reading fairy tales, accuse their mothers of not being their real mothers when they fancy they are being treated unjustly, and we can imagine the feelings of a foster mother when she hears a child, in all innocence of the facts, make this accusation. She loses her feeling of security and she and the child grow distrustful of each other, assume a fighting attitude towards each other. It is always a question whether a foster mother should tell a child that it is not her own. Probably this knowledge should be kept from the child as long as possible, until it is on the point of establishing its own future, and not told in any event before the eighteenth or twentieth year. At the same time, no hints or suggestions of mystery should be permitted. Were the fact known earlier, it might

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well make the proper approach to the child difficult, but if the relation of foster child and mother has been right and sound all along, the knowledge can only deepen the child's affection and make the mother happy in her old age.

Some women are disinclined to have children at all. They think their life is over the moment they have given birth to a child, and they imagine that a mother is much the same as a prisoner—that she has to devote all her time and all her interests to the child. Some—unable absolutely to go against the wish of their husbands—have one or two children and devote themselves so utterly to the one child or the two children that it is perfectly obvious to the whole world that they are really quite unable to manage any more.

Others justify their refusal to have children on the grounds that they cannot guarantee a proper standard of life for them, cannot secure a future for them such as their children have a right to expect. It is true that every grade of society has its own standard of living and that every individual in each grade is entitled to the appropriate standard, but when this explanation is given as a reason for deliberate childlessness it is really only an excuse for selfishness. It simply means that the person who advances it is not inclined to make any sacrifices, for there are many mothers who have brought up children under a very great economic strain and yet those children have done well in life.

Others excuse themselves because of disease in one family or the other, and say they want only absolutely healthy children. Actually the number of diseases which can be transmitted to one's children is very few indeed and this plea of not wishing to rear children with a tendency to disease is often dragged in quite without real justification and merely

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as an excuse. We can see in it the fundamental conclusion, "I—or my husband—would have been better unborn."

There are women who fear that if children come they will lose the undivided attention and love of their husbands. This often happens when the husband has a strong wish for children. Others again feel themselves so inadequate to the task of bringing up children that they find excuses for not having them, arguing that they might spoil their children so badly that it is better not to have any, or that they so much dread the idea of anything happening to a child of theirs that they prefer not to take the risk. The fear of losing their attractiveness during pregnancy, or of being permanently less attractive after it, affects very many women adversely, and even if they do have a child they refuse to nurse it. There are those who feel that their social activities and enjoyment will be curtailed if they have children, and there are those who are so wrapped up in a profession that they are sure they will never have time for children. Others feel that they are too weak physically to go through pregnancy and the pains of childbirth, though they are fond of children, and will sometimes adopt a child rather than expose themselves to such dangers.

All these explanations that are given for childlessness show us perfectly clearly that the women who offer them are not really prepared to have children at all. They are much more interested in themselves than in others and they would not make good mothers.

From what we have already seen in our various considerations up to this point, we may conclude that there are two great duties which mothers owe to their children. The first is that they should be really good mothers by giving the children protection and care, and the feeling that they are

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protected and cared for, without any expectation of a return. The woman who keeps a record of all that she has done for the child and of all that she expects from it in return will never be able to train a child rightly in social feeling. It is most important that children should recognize that it is possible in this world to do something for another person simply out of love and interest.

Most mothers solve this first task very well, but it becomes a danger for the child if the second duty of a mother is not carried out also. A mother's second great duty is to direct the child towards the outside world and to make it sociable. This is a big demand to make of mothers, that they should deliberately give up their children to others—to society—without any feeling of resentment. To make a bridge over which the child can pass from her to the outside world is the most delicate task, the noblest work of a mother. To make a child independent, not to demand affection or gratitude from a child, is a woman's greatest accomplishment.

Too often mothers vent their grievances upon their children, particularly if they are unwanted or illegitimate children. They are severe, they make the children obey them blindly. They try to convince the children that they are always right and the children always wrong. It is easy to laugh at the expression "Mother knows best," but it is said in all seriousness far too often. Sayings like these are not calculated to make a child use its own judgment or to make it self-reliant and courageous. Mothers of the type we are now discussing generally refrain from showing any affection for their children, believing that demonstrations of love will make the children lose respect for them and think them weak. They always want to seem perfect. Yet how much more do we love if we discover weakness in the object of

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our affection? It makes that object human like ourselves, increases our appreciation of the good qualities he or she possesses. If the object is always perfect, or wants us to believe so, we seem always at a distance and our inferiority feelings are greatly increased. Children are bound to discover that their parents are not faultless, but human. If they have been told that their parents are always right, the moment they detect the first fault they at once begin to doubt if they are ever right. The relation of a mother to her child must, above all things and at all times, be a human one.

Now that we have reviewed the many kinds of relationship that may exist between mother and child, we can begin to see, by considering some of the failure, just what it means to be a mother. It does not mean simply to give birth to a child. To be a mother is a real task, a very great one. Like the other real tasks in life it needs a very thorough preparation. What the right preparation is can best be seen by considering what the difficulties are in establishing the right mother-child relationship, because all these difficulties have a common denominator. This, the common denominator, is simply the demand upon social interest and ability to co-operate which motherhood makes. It is the degree of social interest which makes the difference between a good and a bad mother.

Till recent years the proper preparation for motherhood has been gravely neglected. It was accepted as obvious that because a woman is a female she is therefore gifted with the ability to bring up her children rightly. In former times there may have been some truth in this expectation. Girls were kept at home and learned there all the arts of the household; there were many children in the family and the bigger ones helped their mother to take care of and bring up the

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smaller ones. Yet even in those good old times the enormously high death-rate among infants—to speak of nothing else—indicated how little “innate” gifts such women had for the physical care of children. And nowadays, when children from quite an early age are at school most of the day or away from home most of the year, a girl has little or no chance of acquainting herself with the ways of bringing up children. New discoveries in hygiene have, themselves, arrested the attention of mothers and helped them to realize that it is necessary to be informed in a scientific way about the proper method of bringing up children. Women who take the task of motherhood seriously have for some time now interested themselves in everything necessary for the physical well-being of a child. Quite recently, it was recognized that something was necessary also for the proper mental education of a child, though very few so far have interested themselves in this part of their task. It seems too strange and too difficult a kind of knowledge to many of them and they prefer to trust to instinct and to their love for their children.

There is actually a great difficulty between the proper preparation for the physical care and for the mental care of a child. Physical care can be learned from books, and a few days under the guidance of an experienced person can bring the mother to a point where she can really look after a child's physical well-being, his needs, his food and his health, perfectly well. But proper training of a child mentally and psychologically cannot be learned from books and lectures alone. If a woman has not been interested in others in the past she can change herself now she is a mother only if her interest is really aroused and she is willing to place the welfare of her child far above her own comfort and pleasure. Just to love the

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child is not enough. She must love it in the right way. The ability to co-operate and consequently the ability to be a good mother is not inborn but must be trained and developed. A true motherliness is the height of co-operation. This conception of co-operation is not greatly liked by people at first, for they have been told so often that it is their duty to look after themselves first and foremost. We agree absolutely that it is their duty to look after themselves, but we reach this conclusion from a quite different standpoint. In order to accomplish something for others, we ourselves must be in the best possible shape or we shall be of little use. And so we claim that we must prepare ourselves in the best possible way, we must look after ourselves first with the purpose—and this is where the difference in standpoint lies—of looking after the interests of others successfully. It is only our own part in co-operation that we can unconditionally guarantee. To be willing to look after others as mothers commonly consider they are willing to look after their children is not enough: a proper preparation for the task is necessary if a mother would help them in the best way. To be trained in co-operation is not something which mothers alone need but it is something which they need before they can be the best kind of mother.

At this point we should like to speak of birth control. We are not concerned here either with religious or moral points of view on the subject. Psychology does not deal with morality; it deals with human relationships, and for the sake of human relationships we favour a certain measure of birth control. No woman should be forced to give birth to a child if she does not wish to do so. If she really does not want it she cannot be a good mother, cannot educate her child in the right spirit. Since prevention is better than cure, we must

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say that it seems to us far better to have no children than to bring up problem children. Problem children, neurotics and criminals are a burden to society; and it is the business of psychology to try to relieve society of this burden.

Something can be said, however, which will meet the approval of the strongest opponents of birth control. No one denies that a real physical illness, which would bring a woman in jeopardy of her life if she were to bear a child, is a justification for birth control. In all cases where labour would endanger a woman's life, birth control is thought admissible. Other reasons for not having children are always due to the woman's psychological attitude. She does not want to have children and she will find means to avoid doing so. Now we state quite definitely that any woman—except those whose lives would be positively endangered by child-birth—can be brought to a point where she wishes to have children, where her social interest is aroused, where she can be cured from her egocentricity. The task is a difficult one if the woman whose attitude is to be changed is already pregnant but it can be achieved even then. If we reached the point where women were really content to be women, were glad they were women, then birth control would be practised only in medical cases where it was a necessity. This would be true for the married and the unmarried alike. The relations of the sexes, economic conditions and the responsibility of the State towards its citizens must be changed before such a goal can be fulfilled. It will be some time before even a part of our hopes can be realized but it is along these lines that we are confident mankind will progress.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Woman who is Growing Old*

WHEN we come to consider the woman who is beginning to grow old, what age limit ought we to take? Is there a time after which a woman no longer counts, after which she grows useless and superfluous?

Some primitive peoples solved the problem of what to do with old people in a very simple way. They killed them off the moment they became a burden to the community. If that were to be our criterion to-day, however, we should be obliged to kill off many young people and allow many old ones to live. Being old is by no means the same thing as being a burden to others: we must look for some other method of determining at what age we are to consider an individual old. Are we to take the physiological change? This comes very early in some lives: we still need some other standard. In other days, a woman was considered "passée" when she was thirty: Balzac wrote of the woman of thirty as of a woman whose life is over. His view was not challenged; he was thought perfectly right through most of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the present century, Karin Michaelis, the Swedish writer, wrote, *The Dangerous Age of Woman*, a book in which she took up the cudgels for the woman of forty and insisted on her value. Her attitude was much criticized, much argued about, but finally it was accepted that women of forty might still count for something. In 1910 Karl Schauta, the most famous specialist on women of

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his day, published an essay in which he considered the woman of fifty and her chances in life. There was no discussion of his views: everyone refused to admit that he could be right. The opinion of a man who had, as none other, the opportunity to make a penetrating study of the problems of the ageing woman was not considered of sufficient weight.

What did people in 1880 and 1900 and 1910 mean when they said a woman was "passée"? Why was the age limit so different at such short intervals? When Balzac's view that the woman of thirty was of no further use or importance still held sway, when Karin Michaelis tried to advance the age from thirty to forty, both meant the same thing. A woman, in their opinion, did not count in sexual attractiveness after such an age. That was quite true in their time. Women beyond their thirties made themselves conspicuous if they claimed the right to happiness with a member of the other sex. They had a "right to live" only as long as they were able to attract men sexually.

Not so very long ago, no unmarried woman over twenty-five really counted for anything. Married women were considered to retain their attractiveness a little longer, though even this seems remarkable when we consider what damage was done them by a wrong understanding of hygiene and of the way in which a child should be reared. It was quite a common thing for mothers to nurse their children for eighteen months or longer, the technique of obstetrics was very faulty, women were worn out before they had really begun to live at all. They were old at the age girls to-day begin to think of marrying. If a woman attempted to gain independence for herself and to take up some occupation, it was taken for granted that she did so "because she could not find a husband." Women themselves despised old maids;

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and a girl became an old maid if she was not married at twenty-five. No matter what her achievements might be, she was disregarded, despised and pitied if she were still single. Sexual attractiveness was the only standard by which women were judged. It is perfectly clear how, in such circumstances, the woman of thirty and the woman of forty ceased to count.

The great revolution in thought which has taken place in our time with regard to women, was greatly hastened by the World War and is in some respects due to it. In a great many countries, all the able men were at the front or engaged in war work: more hands were needed both to keep up with daily needs and to help carry on the War. A miracle took place. Women proved themselves to be not so useless after all, even when they were over the age of forty. A girl who did not marry no longer lost her standing, for if she was working and useful her help was welcome. She was measured by something else than her ability to attract a man. She was accepted as a human being, not only as a sexual object.

We should be wrong, however, if we denied that there are difficulties to be met in growing older. There are difficulties for men as well as for women, though they are perhaps more severe for women. No one likes to grow old. It is with a feeling of defeat that everybody notices that he or she can no longer do this or that. The elasticity diminishes and the feeling of loss always oppresses the individual more than the fact actually hampers him. The secret formula of the individual who is growing old is "I cannot do it any longer." This inability to perform becomes of vast importance: people who take this attitude create endless handicaps and obstacles for themselves. We have already seen many times in the

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course of this book that it is never the situation itself but the importance which the individual gives to the situation which decides his actions: the way in which the individual regards the situation is of crucial importance in determining what his efficiency will be in meeting his circumstances. To the neurotic, it is always "All or Nothing"; when the "All" cannot be attained, there is only "Nothing" left. Neurotic individuals do not see how much they still have before them; they do not consider how many things they can still do better than others can do them, better than they themselves could have done them formerly; they only see what they cannot do. In strict accordance with their whole style of life, they take up their attitude towards the new situation. We know that there are two great groups into which all individuals can be divided—the active and the passive, those who strive to attain their superiority-goal by active means and those who trust to passive means. The way in which an individual meets the prospect of old age depends on what his goal is, or, rather, it depends on how he sets about making his superiority-goal concrete.

The active types meet this new difficulty with "the fear of the closing door." They will always feel that life owes them something to which they are entitled but which they never yet got and that the time is growing short. Very few men or women are content with their fate, conscious that they themselves determined it and able to see that no one and nothing is to be blamed for it but themselves. Most of them are full of reproaches because they did not have the chance to live in the way they wanted to; they accuse circumstances, family considerations, tradition and so forth. But what do they really mean by saying that life owes them something? Why are they afraid they will never get what they want?

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The explanation is, of course, that such people have not achieved their ambitions and fear that they have no time left. Either their ambitions were too high or the wish to realize them was not sincere. Terror of "the closing door" has beset them; they are handicapped by the feeling that there lies before them more than they can accomplish, that they are unable to accomplish what they wish. It is not merely the opportunity to contribute which they want; they hunger to see their personal ambitions rewarded and there is the feeling that they have wasted their time up till now.

So long as we are still young and find ourselves in an unsatisfactory situation, we can still say that we will change it to-morrow. But at a certain age people have to realize that to-morrow will never come: they begin regretting yesterday. Now we can understand why women exaggeratedly fear growing old. If they are married not very happily, a time comes when they realize that they could no longer make a change successfully. Others think to themselves that to have known life only with one man has denied them many experiences that they would have wished to have. With this problem as with every other, so long as a discouraged person can act voluntarily, it is all right, but the moment it seems obligatory they can bear it no longer. As long as a woman is free to be faithful to her husband because she knows she can attract other men if she wishes, she is quite content to be so. The moment she sees that younger women get more attention, the idea "I must" becomes an obsession. It was with this in mind that Karin Michaelis called the forties the dangerous age, because in terror of "the closing door" women of forty sometimes feel driven to do things which they would never have considered doing when, actually, it would have been much easier. We often see both men and women who

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paid little or no attention to the other sex, suddenly, at the change of life, try to get as much out of life as they can. They go to dancing schools, or beauty parlours, and take up all sorts of activities. This used to be explained by the fact that people who develop relatively late in life had no time to seek enjoyment earlier, since the struggle for existence occupied them so completely that they had no freedom for anything else; now that they have achieved a good deal and have reached a certain point of success they want to relax and take things easily. In our opinion, however, this explanation is only in some part true. Those who concentrate exclusively on success in their career during the early part of life are really not interested enough in the opposite sex, not interested to the extent where they will sacrifice another ambition for the sake of a partner in love. They believe that they can do so at any time they want to but meanwhile they are quite well as they are. As time passes there comes a moment when they suddenly realize, "I must do it now or it will be too late." And since, if a person has not prepared for a situation, we cannot expect him to find no difficulties when he faces it, we can understand easily enough why certain individuals make themselves so ridiculous when they grow old. When a person does things which are not in harmony with his whole personality, then he is bound to be ridiculous. If an elderly person behaves like an adolescent, we cannot help smiling at him, more out of pity than from pleasure. He shows us so clearly what he finds so hard to give up. To part from youth in a dignified way is one of the most difficult problems for any human being.

With the thought of youth is always combined the thought of beauty and attractiveness. Women are trained to regard youth and attractiveness as their greatest assets and to

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disregard their other qualities and capacities. It is easy to see why women have such a hard time in parting from youthfulness; and the more importance they have attached to their appearance the harder time they have. When they see the first wrinkle or the first grey hair they feel that their value has depreciated. The women who fight to retain youth as long as possible are the women who have been fighting throughout life. They are fighting for more than beauty. They fight for their position in life, which they themselves regard as being largely dependent upon youth and beauty. Such women want to keep their sphere of influence intact, not only in the family but everywhere: they are afraid of losing their empire. They feel unable to compete with other women, unable to continue to attract their husbands or to retain influence over their children. They see everything they count valuable endangered. Actually, it depends entirely upon a woman's own attitude whether she can continue to play a useful rôle in life and keep the appreciation of others as she grows older.

The commonest type of women who fights against time is the one who continues wearing youthful clothes, not realizing that by comparison these make her face look old. She behaves like a young girl, not understanding that an attitude which lent her considerable charm years ago now looks out of place. She takes pains to excel at sports and associates with young people. In consequence, she exerts herself much more than is wholesome for her and these exertions make her age more quickly than she need. She takes compliments literally; nothing delights her more than to be mistaken for the sister of her daughters. She employs an arsenal of beauty preparations, makes the fortune of beauty specialists. All this is essential to her.

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Now it is right and proper that every human being should take as much care of himself, both physically and in every way, as possible, that every one should be as healthy as possible. To be presentable is part of our consideration for others. But no one should demand from nature what is impossible. If anyone tries to force nature he will have to pay too high a price in later life. Efforts to be young, to be active, to play an equal part with others, should be stimulated by social feeling, not by uneasiness of prestige.

The woman of this type entirely changes her daily routine. She begins to hunt for excitement, she becomes restless and pleasure-seeking. She ceases to discriminate in her choice of friends: anyone will be welcome who is prepared to make compliments and pay attentions. She surrounds herself with young men who find, in the attentions of older women, an easy conquest. She dances with them, sometimes paying not only the expenses but also for the time which these young men devote to her. Sometimes she goes further and seeks for sexual satisfaction in order to still her fears of growing old. The terror of the closing door has her in its clutches. We can understand how sometimes women who have led an exemplary life up to a certain point suddenly want to snatch at everything they have missed or think they have missed. And when we hear people speak of having missed something in life they almost always mean sexual enjoyment. Women who up till the end of their youthfulness appear to be frigid suddenly turn temperamental. Their attitude towards sex has been so set that it is beyond them to change their training; the attention they have given to sex, even in negating it, has increased their desire. The husband of such a woman, generally older than she is and having himself gone through her present experiences, is seldom able to satisfy her or



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interested in the task; or perhaps the wife does not dare to let her husband know what she feels and therefore is obliged to look elsewhere for fulfilment.

The change of attitude shows in the home too. By this time the children will have grown out of close contact with the mother and want to go their own way. Strong as these women are, they feel deserted, their sphere of power seems lessened and so they turn their attention increasingly elsewhere. Adolescent children are cruel: they regard their parents as old people who have lived their lives and should ask for nothing but peace. They have little understanding for or sympathy with a pleasure-seeking mother, even if they might understand a pleasure-seeking father. They will generally have been brought up to think that a woman's place is in the home—or that their mother's place is there. The mother will consequently often be reminded that she has no right to make demands on life and the tension between her and the adolescent children will be increased. In later life, when the children are older and the mother has finally found her right place, the tension is frequently broken and there is a reconciliation; the critical period is over. But meanwhile the children are fighting their way through the period of adolescence and the mother through the change of life. We cannot expect concessions from the children but we may expect that in the future the mother will be able to contribute more than she does under the present circumstances.

These women fighting for a lost position will, of course, observe themselves closely and every sign that they are growing old will be particularly noted. It will be especially important that the periods be regular; the slightest deviation from normal will be overstressed and this overvaluation can actually

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cause irregularities. The women become easily depressed; they think about suicide. The coincidence of change of life with the beginnings of melancholia is so common that until a few years ago psychiatrists saw a casual connection between them. We know now that any situation in life can be taken so seriously by an individual, and found so impossible to meet, that he will seize upon anything that promises a solution. If from the fear of growing old—the same as the fear of death—any individual develops melancholia we shall always find that this same person met other difficulties, before that, with depression and despair. Only a strong, stubborn and determined person, a person with a great wish to dominate, will ever develop melancholia. The change of life is the last provocation among many to provoke this strong attempt at defence.

The following case, one among thousands, shows that such a reaction towards growing old is of daily occurrence. A woman of forty-five was sent to me by her family physician, to determine whether her loss of interest in life was due to some gynecological disturbance, since he could find nothing organic to explain her condition. She was in good physical health and there proved to be nothing wrong gynecologically. Conversation with her brought out some interesting facts. She was thinking about suicide. Life did not interest her as much as it had done before. She knew she would not commit suicide but she talked about it. She flirted with the idea that she could commit suicide whenever she wanted to. She refused any kind of treatment but came, from time to time, to pour out her heart. She was one of the women who lead an idle life. Her husband was well off and she did nothing but go from one *thé dansant* to another. She danced a good deal but did not enjoy it as much as

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formerly. Her whole frame of mind was revolving around the idea that she was growing old, was not as popular as she used to be, not as good-looking as she used to be. She was in fact quite attractive, with the figure of a young girl, but her face showed her age quite clearly. Her women friends were, and always had been, younger than herself. Now she had begun to resent the fact that, apparently, they retained their popularity better than she did. Some days she was in a better humour than others. One day she gave herself away so completely that it was easily seen in what circumstances she could recover her enjoyment of life. She was very alert and happy that particular day, and in a voice ringing with happiness, as though she were speaking of the first prize in a lottery which she had just won, she recounted how awful her best friend had looked the day before. The tendency to observe the weak spots in others is an excellent way of enhancing one's own value. This woman rarely spoke of others without saying something harsh about them. Such a tendency shows us a definite feeling of inferiority on the part of the patient. By being so critical she put others on a lower level than belonged to them by rights, and this made it easy for her to feel superior.

In the course of conversation, it appeared that as a child she did not get on well with her brothers and sisters. She told tales about them to her mother, whose favourite she was. Later she gave up tale-telling but continued to offer gratuitous advice to people and to order them about. She always chose friends younger than herself—another indication that she was seeking an easy way to superiority. No one will be surprised to learn that when she came for consultation she was dressed like a girl and assumed the gaiety of youth. Quite incidentally, she mentioned that she had two

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children of twelve and fourteen. They were so busy studying that they had no time for her, and anyway, there was a governess to look after them, and the children were particularly fond of their father. In short, here was a woman who had lost her hold on life. Now she felt herself less admired than before, she began to enjoy dancing less; yet she went to a *thé dansant* every single day just to find out if, perhaps, she were mistaken about being less popular and whether things might not turn out better to-day. She had refused to admit she was playing a losing game.

Women of this sort can often be seen: theirs is one way of trying to banish the fear of losing power. This will be the method adopted only by women who have no other interest in life but themselves, and who have attached too much importance to personal appearance. They will also be the most censorious in watching over the morals of others. The freedom they are unable to get for themselves they will not permit to others.

But there are other methods of combating old age. The women who give in before they need stand on the other side of the picture from those who will not give in when they should. These women have always given in before it was necessary, all their lives long: in this way they have protected their superiority. They have never been defeated because they have never competed. We cannot expect such women to fight now they are growing old. Long before it is necessary, a woman of this kind suspects that she is less desirable than she once was. She will act in the following way. She grows careless about her clothes and her general appearance. She limits her circle of activities. She stays at home, lets her husband go out alone, even if he would prefer her to accompany him. Yet she is hurt that he should go out

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without her. She tortures him with her jealousy, embitters his life and her own. She treats her grown children as if they were babies, because in her care of the children is her one justification for existence, and she is jealous of their friendships and envious of their pleasures. She thinks that all games and sports, theatres and so forth are quite inappropriate for an "old woman like me," and so she fritters away her time with little tasks, suddenly grows very economical, and sits weeping at home. The least joke offends her, she cries, she scolds, and though she poses as an "old woman" she is mortally hurt if anyone takes her at her own valuation and treats her like one. All this, of course, is no way to keep up with the development and interests of her children, no way to take a real part in her husband's life. Soon she finds herself isolated from the rest of the family, very much in the same way as the other type of women we described before. From there it is but a short stage to the melancholia so often found at the menopause, which is merely the battle against old age fought by wrong weapons.

The following case is typical of this sort of woman. She was forty-four years old, and presented a remarkable appearance. She wore old-fashioned clothes and had her hair done as our grandmothers used to do theirs. She came to ask if irregularity in her periods meant that she had reached the change of life. Examination proved there was nothing physically wrong with her, and it was conversation which led to the discovery of what was actually worrying her. She was concerned about her husband, who was the same age as herself, but while he was full of zest for life she was an "old woman" for whom home was the best place. She no longer got any pleasure out of her children. Her big son preferred

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his father's company to hers. It was true that her husband always asked her to go out with him, but she felt she was so quiet and so dull that she would hamper him. Yet she had followed him, secretly, of late and had seen him at a gathering where there were several women and where he seemed to be very gay and happy though at home he was generally surly. Without letting the patient know, the husband was asked to come and give his version. He was willing to co-operate and anxious for his wife to keep pace with him. He, too, asked for help because he wanted to enjoy life and the happiness of marriage was being endangered by the wife's attitude of withdrawal. She had always been quiet. As a girl, still living at home, she had been afraid of her masterful father. Her husband was very anxious for her to take herself in hand, to stop making herself out so old, for he was extremely fond of her. So, when she paid her next visit, it was suggested that she should have her hair done more becomingly. She rejected the idea very firmly, but as she spoke there was a shy gleam of hope in her eye, as though she had accepted the suggestion. The idea was enlarged upon, she was told that she should go out with her husband, even to dances, that *she* should suggest this to him that self-same day. She was completely taken aback by this—and won over. The idea of her taking the initiative with her husband struck her so forcibly that she agreed to all the other suggestions and actually carried them out.

All that she needed was someone in whose objectivity she had faith to convince her that she was not old. Success was not far away. A few days later a post-card arrived, written by both of them at a gay party: two weeks later there came another card, written during one of the husband's business trips, on which she, after having let him go alone for many

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years, had accompanied him. Much later, her husband assured me that the cure was permanent.

Naturally, good results are not obtained so easily in every case, but the greater the difficulty the greater the joy if there is success. It is hardly necessary to add that the irregularities in this woman's periods became very much less, since she paid less attention to them. She was restored to her family and the fear of growing old was diminished by finding how many things there were she could still do.

The two types described have much in common, though their attitudes are quite different. The fear of growing old is expressed according to type, according to the style of life: both types meet this danger in the same way they met everything that ever happened to them. The one fights, the other is resigned before it is necessary. The first—or rather the most dreaded—sign of the oncoming of old age is a deviation from the normal course of menstruation or some other little symptom. The first type rushes to a doctor to be reassured and comforted, to find some means of postponing, even if only for a little while, this definite indication of the approach of what she so much dreads. The other type also rushes to a doctor if only to have the miserable satisfaction of knowing that she is right to withdraw from society. "After all, I am old," she sighs.

There is yet another type of woman, belonging to no special group, who may be active or may be passive. She tries to escape the threat of old age—by playing cards. So there has come into being a new sort of woman, who can be found all over the world. The active women play cards recklessly, any sort of card games. The others will take up a game which is in fashion at the moment. At the card tables we find not only older women, but young ones, even girls.

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These are the girls who have given up the fight very early in life, whereas the older ones—though they distrust their ability any longer to carry on successfully in other spheres of life—want still to reckon here as among the youth of the day. They believe they are in contact with the world, though in fact they are really withdrawing from the community. Let us consider for a moment what incessant card playing really means. We are not, of course, referring to the occasional games played for rest and relaxation. A real card player is to her associates—just a card player. She is no longer valued as a human being but as a more or less adept card player. At the same time, the inveterate card player herself loses interest in everything which held her attention up to now: husband, children, friends, normal social contacts—everything but cards.

We need hardly explain that this game craze is the expression of wide and deep discouragement. Such women are intelligent; the intellect and energy used in these games are often remarkable. The women persuade themselves they are doing something active, even something creative. Yet inevitably each of these players comes to a point where she realizes that she has wasted her best years and her energy and has nothing to look forward to.

Considering these three types together, it is apparent that all of them lack one thing—the ability to face the situation calmly for what it is. Looking more closely still, we see that this mistaken attitude does not crop up suddenly, at this particular period, for the first time. Since earliest childhood these women have dreaded facing this very problem.

How often young girls say, "I hope I shall die when I am forty, instead of growing old and ugly." To take this mistaken attitude is a real tragedy. It is to face life as if a woman's



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only justification for life lay in the fact that she is a sexual object: as if the only goal worth striving for were the conquest of man. It is true that the problem of love and marriage is a very important one; but it must not be overvalued. There are other important problems to be solved too. There is the problem of social contact, which leads up to and includes love and marriage. There is the problem of occupation to be solved by every well-adjusted human being. Once find the solution to all these problems and no one need fear old age. It is because none of the women we have so far described have been able to grasp the fact that every age has its own joys, its own worth, that they are unprepared and unwilling to grow old.

There have always been some women who have known how to adjust themselves to circumstances at this and other critical periods, who have known how to preserve beauty even when their faces are wrinkled. These are women who never really age, in whom one recognizes an unbroken spirit. They have preserved their poise, are not victims of the terror of the closing door. Naturally, there are difficulties and problems in life for everyone; some meet them easily, some less easily, but no one can gain illimitable power from any situation, least of all when the problem to face is caused by unalterable circumstances. It is a proof of the right approach to life if a person is able to accept his position courageously, facing the facts, without wasting energy on useless things. To attempt to recapture youth, to try to be twenty again, is as useless as to want the world to revolve in the opposite direction.

We might well question what is the secret that some women have discovered which has provided them with a remedy for the fear of growing old. These women have

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made for themselves another aim in life than competition in attractiveness and the ability to gain attention from the other sex. They have found something to fill their time, to engage their interest, beyond their household duties, beyond their care of their children. Once it was far more difficult for women to do this than it is now. They used to be educated in a way that made them useful in the home but left them little external field of activity unless it were in social work. Even then, though they were limited to a narrow and private field, they did much to allay suffering. Some studied, perfected themselves at various tasks, enlarged their mental horizon. In such ways they succeeded in expressing their social feeling, retained their self-respect and justified their existence.

But to-day many other ways than these lie open. Modern education provides a firmer, broader background: all kinds of new opportunities have opened out. The professions are open to women. There are unlimited possibilities for them to bear financial responsibilities or help their husbands to bear theirs. In some circles to-day it is almost impossible for a man alone to support his family decently. The woman *must* help. This tremendous change has had an enormous effect on the valuation of women in the community at large.

We see a miracle taking place under our eyes. The many women who solve the problem of advancing years by means of occupation seem to grow younger without any effort on their part. They bloom, grow handsomer just because they realize that there is a place for them in society, that they really count for something. They have solved their problem, kept up with the development of the times and need not fear old age, for in their work they are still young. It is not necessary that the goal of such a woman should be to equal

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Ninon de Lenclos, who at the age of seventy was as attractive to men and made as many conquests as any girl of twenty. Her goal could be as contributive as that of Jane Addams, who, in her seventies, is still young and helpful to all women; or that of Marianne Hainisch, the mother of the first president of the Austrian Republic, who, at the age of ninety, is the leader of all the women of Austria and as active as she has ever been. These women never grow old and never feel excluded. Not everybody will have the personality and the good fortune to develop to such heights; but these examples show us that we can never put a limit to the age at which a woman can continue to contribute to our culture.

It is this which really justifies the claim we made in a former chapter: that every woman should have some activity outside the home.

This necessity is even more strikingly obvious when we consider the figures given by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Commerce in Washington. Amongst all married women of 45 years and over, 77.6 per cent are either divorce or widowed. We need not deal here with the reasons why over three-quarters of the married women of these ages are left alone. In part husbands are generally older than their wives and might be expected to die earlier. In part a woman's expectation of life is in any case higher than a man's. Perhaps after divorce men look rather for a younger woman if they remarry than for a woman of their own age. Whatever reasons contribute to the situation it remains clear there must be some activity outside of the home for all these ageing women.

Not all of them have insurances or trust-funds; not all of them are free from the need to earn a living. There are not always children who are willing and able to take care of them. They are too young to retire into a home for old and help-

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less people. They are not ready to resign from everything in life and sit in a stupor by the fire-side.

But the problem is not all economic. They need a content for their lives; they need activity to fill their time. Their children are beyond the age in which they demanded all their mother's care and attention. We cannot expect them to play bridge the whole day through or to occupy the rest of their lives with lectures, theatres and travelling. This is not living; it is marking time until death comes. We can see women who are condemned to such a meaningless life growing into hypochondriacs, busybodies, or petty tyrants, a burden to themselves and to others.

It is possible to build up activities in later life but it is much easier to go ahead if the interest and the activities of earlier years have not been broken off. The wife and mother can decrease her outside activities but she should never give them up entirely. It demands a far greater expense of energy to begin all over again than merely to continue and intensify a well-loved and customary activity.

The unmarried woman who is growing old is in a still different position. There are two kinds: the "old maid" and the "good sport." The old maid really belongs to our consideration at the moment only so far as her age is concerned. She has no fresh problem in growing old because she was never really young. There are young girls of nineteen and twenty who already give the impression of being old and discarded, the girls who are too shy to make any contact with the other sex, perhaps too shy even to make friends with other girls. We find them running the household for their parents, or for their brothers and sisters, or accepting positions of minor importance. They have been discouraged since childhood and have always played the rôle of Cinderella.

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They never expected anything from life, they made no demands from it, and therefore got nothing. They may have loved some man from a distance but they never let him guess they were interested in him. Even if they marry in later life, they remain old maids. As they grow old they generally become more cheerful; they are relieved because they know that it is impossible that anything should happen to them; they will not be expected to face anything. The more aggressive old maids were once disappointed girls who wished to play a leading rôle and could not. Their resentment against the feminine rôle is so great that they made demands no man could meet and finally withdrew from the combat, deeply embittered. They are disappointed, too, in their careers, for here too their great ambition was not fulfilled. They were unable to get on with their fellow workers or their superiors and so did not advance far. There is nothing left for them but to turn to politics or to become feminists. In this group we also find the women who have been unsuccessfully married and who, like the others, have become man-haters. It is always rather suspicious if a woman fights for women's rights. Women's rights can actually be fought for only by the achievements of poised women, only by the co-operation of the sexes, and never with noise and hatred. To fight against any class or group of people is always a sign of discouragement, never a sign of self-confidence. Real accomplishments will always show themselves and we can never win appreciation by force. Women do not need to fight against men. If women all helped each other and gave each other their proper due, then men would be forced to join in. We shall note in the chapter on women in business that women are worse enemies of women than men are.

Before ending this chapter, we must say one word about

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grandmothers and about mothers-in-law. Grandmothers are notorious for spoiling their grandchildren to a tremendous extent. Why do they do this? They are seeking tenderness and love and appreciation. Perhaps the husband is dead or no longer shows love for them, their own children have gone off on their own affairs, and nothing is left to gratify that desire for tenderness which many women feel. The grandchildren are the best solace. On them they can pour out all their love and care, they can bribe the grandchildren with indulgence. Unfortunately, they do the children no service. We have seen that overindulgence is harmful for any individual, so that this kind of grandmother we really do not welcome at all.

Why have mothers-in-law such a bad reputation? Latterly, they have rather improved that reputation; they have grown kinder and do not interfere so much. Women have not been forced to regard themselves as "old" at so early an age and their interests have been widened. There are two kinds of mothers-in-law. There have always been those who had a good reputation, were loved by their sons and daughters-in-law almost as much as by their own children. They did not interfere, even if they were asked to. They listened to complaints but did not incite their children against their marriage partners. The children simply eased their minds by confiding in them but did not find the mother eager by blind agreement to harden their hearts. No one has any right to interfere in the relationship of two partners unless he has a deep knowledge of and love for human nature and even then the advisor takes a great responsibility.

But we must also say a word or two in defence of the mother-in-law of the other kind, now rarer than it used to be. They were the women left alone in later life, disappointed

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women who had always claimed property rights in their children. As long as any mothers continue to take this attitude there will be the wrong kind of mother-in-law. They are not as guilty as they seem. They know no better; they have the best intentions, though the results are often disastrous. Some marriages have even gone on the rocks because of a mother-in-law, and it is difficult for the child to see that the mother's interference came from her unhappiness. The mothers must change so that the children may be happier. They must change in the way we have urged for all women who are growing older. By creating a sphere of activity for themselves they will cease to need to interfere uselessly in the lives of others, even in the lives of their own children.

No matter what the difficulties of the woman who is growing old may be, the one and only insurance against them is an occupation, is to have useful interests and activities. The women who are accomplishing something have no need to complain about the things they can no longer do, for they will be proud of the things which they can and still do achieve.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Women at Work*

IN the foregoing chapters we have touched only occasionally upon women in relation to business or occupation. The moment has come when we must discuss this whole problem. Up to now we have considered the character development of the female child, have followed the girl and the woman through the various stages of her life, and have studied her attitude towards the three problems of life as a whole. So far, however, more attention has been given to the ways in which woman approaches the problems of friendship, love and marriage. Her attitude to the problem of occupation will depend, obviously, as much on her whole preparation for life as did her attitude to the other problems; but here the opinion she has formed about her sexual rôle will clearly have a very considerable effect. Her choice of profession will depend largely on her personality ideal and on her conception of what is fitting and possible to a woman.

No choice of profession or of occupation is entirely accidental, even where economic pressure is very great. All individuals are able to exercise a certain freedom of choice, both in deciding what particular task they believe themselves best able to accomplish and in the ways they take to find such a field of activity. The kind of training any girl undertakes with a view to her future profession or occupation shows clearly enough what her attitude towards her sexual rôle is, what her capacities are and what is her degree of self-esteem.



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Thus we shall find one woman who, after an experience of unhappy family life during her childhood, will want to use her occupation to escape from the fate of a married woman, which she has come to regard as undesirable. We shall find others who are influenced, one way or another, when they are selecting their occupation, by the position that the mother and other female members of their household occupied. There will be girls who, in their own estimation, are only fit for humble and unimportant tasks. There will be some—the fighting and rebellious types—who wish to compensate for feelings of inferiority by selecting occupations usually considered as almost exclusively masculine.

At this point we must insist that there are, in fact, no occupations of major or minor importance. No occupation which is taken up and followed whole-heartedly can ever be a minor one: no work can be of major importance which is taken up from a wrong impulse and with the wrong goal in view. A woman can never cease being a woman and the more she strives to act *as if* she were a man the less she will be able to accomplish. Only those women who are wholly reconciled to their sexual rôle will be able to employ their latent capacities fully and reach the highest point of development. It is only these who will be able to pursue their occupations out of real interest and not in order to prove that they are *like* men. As we shall see later, a woman has a mental capacity no less than that of a man; she has the same chances for complete development and fulfilment if her energy is not exhausted by fighting against nature. The work of a housewife can be as difficult and as satisfying as any other job and can be carried out with every bit as much responsibility and intelligence as the job of being President of the United States. Indeed, if only human beings were able to see and

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to admit that it is possible for each one in his or her own sphere—rightly chosen and responsibly filled—to achieve the highest possible standing, then the whole of human life would be infinitely happier.

It follows from this that women are not compelled to make a choice between an occupation on the one hand and marriage on the other. Indeed, only those women insist that there is an exclusive choice to be made who themselves greatly resent playing the feminine rôle and imagine that a woman loses everything the moment she gets married. A woman who is content to be a woman will be efficient in any kind of job that interests her and will at the same time be perfectly able to be a happy wife and mother. Men who are likewise called upon to contribute to the family and its success and happiness do not make such a strong antithesis between the problems of love and marriage and of occupation.

If we had really achieved anything like equality for the two sexes, woman would no longer struggle to achieve significance on the useless side of life. She would not try to add to her own importance—as so many women nowadays do—by making herself quite unnecessarily into the servant of the whole family, striving thus to reach her goal of superiority by making herself acknowledged as indispensable and rendering all the other members of the family conscious of their dependence upon her. She would cease to strive for domination by ruling everybody around her. It would no longer be necessary for her to play these wasteful games, since if she were fitted and willing to follow her own interests outside the home, she would have won the appreciation all too often denied her to-day.

Facts, after all, speak more eloquently than theories. By now, women have realized to a considerable extent that

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the problems of occupation and of love and marriage are not in conflict. To-day it is hardly a question whether women should or should not work outside the home. We need only turn to the Census Monographs, Volume IX, "Women in Gainful Occupations." According to the statistics given here, the number of women in paid occupations in the United States is considerably lower than the proportionate numbers so employed in the principal European countries. This is partly due to the way in which the figures are computed; partly, however, to the fact that in Europe the economic pressure has been greater than in America. Nevertheless, in the year 1920 there were in the United States 8,202,901 women of sixteen years and over engaged in gainful occupations. There were another 1,436,840 in colleges and other educational institutions, preparing themselves to take up similar work. Altogether their numbers represented 28.2 per cent of all the women in the United States; nearly a third of all the women of the nation were already at that time plainly willing to take their fate in their own hands and to contribute to the common welfare.

It is not suggested for one moment that housework and domestic work generally are of less importance than a paid occupation outside the home. It should not be less esteemed. But the desire to do work outside the home shows on the part of all these women a distinct expression of courage and independence, quite irrespective of economic necessity. And the figures themselves did not include, by any means, all those women in the United States who were occupied in work other than their own housework and domestic management. All those who were co-workers with their husbands, fathers or other relatives, without having any specified wage, were not included among them, nor were the great number of women

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seriously occupied with social service and charity, whose economic status allowed them to do this work without remuneration. These figures eloquently tell us that there is no longer any argument whether women are able to work: women *are* working. At the time when the figures were collected there was more prejudice against women's work in some parts of the United States than in others, and more prejudice in most parts of the United States than exists to-day. The number of working women steadily increases and prejudices steadily diminish. It is very illuminating in this connection to note that two out of every nine of those eight million or more women were married. This figure does not include agricultural workers, where the percentage of married working women is much greater. The problem is no longer whether women should work, but how to decide what work is best fitted for them and in which fields they can achieve their best.

By far the greatest number of workers are occupied with manual labour: there men and women are alike operative. But what is more interesting for us to consider is the achievements of women in intellectual activity of various kinds, since it is here that there has been most discussion over the relative gifts of the two sexes. Are women as capable as men in this realm? By what measure can we reach our conclusions?

The intellectual woman worker is a new portent in our cultural world. Hitherto women's skill in manual work had been recognized, but it was doubted whether her intellectual abilities were equal to those of men. When we come to examine statistics it would seem at first as though this opinion were endorsed. In many professions women do not attain so high a level of success as men. Women often appear as assistants or as co-workers, but they are rarely bearers of

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responsibility. Now it is often asserted that for the past fifty years women have enjoyed the same educational opportunities as men and yet, with few exceptions, that little of outstanding merit has been accomplished by them. Even the feminists—warm defenders of women—seem a little hesitant here. Others are willing to admit that in some fields women have enjoyed nothing like the same opportunities but point out that in other fields which have always been open to them—such, for instance, as art and music—there has still been no very great accomplishment on their part.

Before we continue to examine this whole question further we must state once and for all that at no time and in no way in our own culture have women had the same opportunities as men. Indeed, we have attempted to show throughout all the preceding chapters of this book to what a degree everybody's attitude is different towards men and women, towards boys and girls. If we come to consider it seriously and sincerely, we shall be forced to recognize that it is of little help to admit a girl to a man's university when her whole style of life has been developed in such a way as to convince, her that women are of less worth than men. It is idle to tell a girl she can accomplish as much as a boy if at the bottom of her heart she is convinced that she is really inferior to him. What the results would be in the case if girls who really were spared from infancy onwards any inferiority feeling about their sex, we shall see later.

Scientists here and there have concerned themselves with inquiries made from the physiological point of view to determine why women accomplish less than men. They discovered that women's brain is lighter and smaller than man's and that in consequence the female capacity was correspondingly smaller. This observation, however, did not really prove

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very helpful. In the first place women have slenderer bones and muscles than men, and the female brain is, as might be expected, proportionately smaller. Then, in the second place, it turned out that a number of men with very highly developed mental qualities had relatively small brains. Yet when, at the end of the last century, a German writer, Moebius, published a book on *The Physiological Feeble-mindedness of Women*, he did not provoke many opponents or critics. Other investigators proved that women had less initiative and less energy than men, that they were able to reproduce and imitate but that they were unable to perform creative work. Finally there were some, but few in number, who allowed women the same innate capacities as men but blamed environment and education as factors which hold them back and handicap them. In all these cases we see the tendency to rate feminine intellect as of less value than male intellect. Often the emotional side of woman's nature is blamed for the lack of success of women in various professions. Physiology is brought in with another explanation: it is argued that a human being who is ailing for a fourth part of every month cannot possibly be of as much value as a perfectly healthy individual.

If we come to examine all these various statements and opinions and consider what the average women have accomplished, compared to the average achievement of men, we have to admit that women have not done as well as we could wish. This, however, does not necessarily imply that they will never be able to do better. What is important is that we should find out just what is the obstacle and how we may best remove it.

In the deepest mainsprings of any progress or success there lies a feeling of inadequacy, an inferiority feeling. A person

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who feels no need to improve his present situation will never go ahead, since there is no necessity, no urge. But at the same time, a person burdened with too strong a feeling of inferiority will go ahead only to a certain point; the necessity to improve the situation is countered by discouragement; the person believes he is too weak to achieve real success. Now women—in addition to normal inferiority feelings—have also a feeling of inferiority on account of their sex. They live in a masculine culture; the language they use, proverbial expressions, social habits, the attitude of almost every human being they come in contact with, assumes this inferiority and assumes it all the more persuasively in that the assumption is often more or less unconscious. So long as this profound feeling of inferiority exists in women they will remain unable to achieve their best efforts and will remain unable to accomplish as much as men. The best they can do, indeed, will be obtained by acting *as if* they were men. Their full powers will come to be employed only when they are wholly convinced that being a woman does not involve any inferiority in itself and that they can go ahead *as women* as far as men do.

There *is* no physiological difference in the mental equipment of men and women. No anatomical or physiological differences in the structure of the brain either in general formation or in the structure of the cells have been found. The achievements of women in a number of fields in the recent past have proved that at least not all of them are essentially inferior or unable to excel along the same lines as men. The number of instances which could be cited is so great that they can no longer be called exceptions as they used to be called; women have won for themselves all the fields in which they have worked. At first, as it was the only field open to them, they excelled in charity and social service; and their accom-

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plishments were so notable that no one can feel their value was diminished because their work was voluntary and unpaid. Florence Nightingale became the first trained nurse and recognized the importance of a thorough education in work that had hitherto depended on the amateur enthusiasm of good hearts. She not only made great advances in hygiene and helped by her influence and her example to save the lives of millions; she also showed the way to a livelihood and gave a content to the lives of innumerable families. In 1920 there were 149,128 trained nurses in the United States; and it was Florence Nightingale who, against much hostility and ridicule, opened out such possibilities for women who wish to find a practical outlet for their motherly feelings and their goal of helping others.

Another great achievement in the same field was the work of Lilian Wald. It was she who recognized the need for trained help in poor homes where the mother was sick in bed or had gone to the hospital and the rest of the family was suffering from the lack of any care or attention. She founded the first district nurse settlement and now the poorest of the poor are not deprived of help in their difficulties. These quiet heroes and heroines deserve a monument as much as any who have played their part for the welfare of mankind. It is not only in invention or in business that something can be contributed to the human race; and sometimes the silent contributions speak louder than those which are attended with trumpets.

In business triumphs also women have had their share. In our own day in New York there are two women at the head of department stores. One is Mary Lewis, a vice-president of Best's, an expert in advertisement and promotion—till recently an exclusively "masculine" field; the other is Dorothy



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Shaver, vice-president at Lord and Taylor's, in charge of fashion, decorating, publicity and advertising. The founder of the most famous department store in Europe, Bon Marché, was a woman, and the director of one of the largest banks in Japan is a woman. Nobody needs to be reminded of the organizing ability of Alice Foote McDougall, who started without any capital and by her talents and energy established a number of famous restaurants in New York and made her products admired and appreciated through the whole of the United States.

Mme. Curie became famous for her researches in radium, and Doctor Montessori for her invaluable work in education. In literature we have, during the last century, the great achievements of Jane Austen, George Sand, George Eliot and the Brontë Sisters; and the present century is so full of famous writers that it would be invidious to select names. We may mention, however, that two women writers, Selma Lagerlöf and Sigrid Unset, have been honoured with the Nobel Prize for literature, and one, Bertha Suttner of Vienna, with the Nobel Peace Prize. In England two women have held Cabinet rank with great success; and Annie Besant in India was elected president of the Indian National Congress.

We have mentioned only a few of the names that come first to the memory; but in considering the women who have made contributions of first importance to our lives no one could omit to mention one of the outstanding women of all times, Jane Addams who, now in her seventies, is revered and loved in the hearts of men and women all the world over. It is true that in the average woman's present state of mind and under the existing circumstances, women are bound to be more apt for some kinds of work than for others. It is true, equally, that among men some are best fitted for

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manual work, others for routine work, others again for creative work for organization. Vocational guidance is a new science which attempts to get the best out of every one, to give every one the best opportunities for developing himself to the highest degree. But up to the present, certain kinds of occupation were always regarded as especially masculine and others as especially feminine. When we come to consider what the difference was supposed to be, we find, generally speaking, that the feminine occupations were those in which women could practise knowledge acquired in the home and that all the others were masculine. It was regarded as an offence against womanhood if a woman wished to break away from the feminine occupations, and equally it was considered undignified for a man to do woman's work—though, significantly enough in our culture, men found a pleasant solution if they did actually want to follow a so-called feminine occupation. They lent it an air or a name which consecrated it, as it were, to manhood. We need only consider a few instances.

Cooking was woman's work, but if a man wanted to be a cook he became a *chef*. Women always did the sewing, but when a man made clothes he was called a tailor. Though embroidery is regarded as a decidedly feminine occupation, there are whole villages in some parts of Europe where the inhabitants of both sexes make a livelihood by embroidering, and in those districts embroidery is not regarded as an absurd occupation for a man at all. Equally, in the Middle Ages only midwives attended the birth of a child. The most useful instruments employed in obstetrics were invented by women. Yet the moment men entered this field, they were called obstetricians and midwives were relegated to the position of assistants. Examples of the kind could be given indefinitely

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and serve to show that men, in fact, were never really debarred from following the so-called feminine occupations.

Now let us consider some of the specifically masculine tasks. Perhaps the calling which people regard as the most masculine of all is that of soldier. Under matriarchies women did this work perfectly well, and they are doing it again in contemporary Russia. Although women are not excluded from this profession, it certainly seems that men are better adapted for many branches of it, and we can perhaps explain how it was that, in the past, women ceased to be predominant when we remember that at a certain stage in human history professional soldiers took the place of men and women fighting primarily in defence of their families, their tribes or their cities. The professional soldiers and their leaders became more and more powerful until at a certain period they became the masters. At this stage matriarchy was over.

Other definitely masculine occupations are those which demand extremely strong muscles; though only a certain proportion of men can follow these occupations—they demand both a special training and a special bodily constitution. The majority of women are not as muscular as men, and women do not train to be strong as commonly as men do; yet at times we find women doing very hard work. The occupations where muscular strength is essential are, in the machine age, gradually growing less. In our own time we have seen many processes of manufacture made so simple that an individual of little strength can easily perform the necessary operations. I myself am averse to seeing women undertake violent physical exertions: the danger of physical injury is too great for those responsible for the procreation of mankind. It is true that the danger women anticipate in childbirth may be great; but that is a grateful risk and quite

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unlike risking bodily damage merely for the sake of work which another may do equally well. It is perhaps from a sentimental feeling that one tends to prevent women from undertaking strenuous physical labour; but at the same time there is a very real objection, since we should counsel a man of inferior physical strength also to refrain from doing such work. A weaker person of either sex would be on an unfair footing in competing with those of greater muscular power and would, while striving harder, become exhausted sooner. In consequence, the objection to women doing work that demands great muscular strength is not entirely sentimental but is based on consideration of vocational fitness. Obviously no one would object to a professional strong woman, like Kate Sandwina, doing the most arduous kind of physical work. Sandwina, who can support cart horses on her chest, and other athletes like her, are more than a match for any but the strongest men, equally professionally trained in muscular activity.

But let us come now to those masculine occupations which demand an intellectual training. Plainly there is no difference in the equipment of the sexes here: both have brains that can be trained. All we need to ask is whether there really are professions that specifically demand a man's brain and which a woman is inefficient to undertake. Already there are very few professions once regarded as exclusively masculine into which women have not penetrated to some degree. The woman physician, the woman lawyer are seen everywhere, though only a very short time ago such careers were regarded as being wholly inappropriate. The higher education of women was a luxury, not a commonplace, up to twenty or thirty years ago: it has only quite recently been recognized that for women as for men the best education will give the best social results. Even now, there are some professions

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where women are still the exception: we do not meet with many women judges, for instance. It is only by slow stages that women are overcoming the prejudice against their aptitude for certain kinds of work, though where by an accident the task of ruling an entire country fell to a woman it has often been carried out—notably in England—with conspicuous success.

In America, women's colleges have been in existence over half a century: they were founded because women were not admitted to male institutions. In Europe as a whole, where economic stress has been more severe and where also in many ways the desire to help one's fellow-men is less developed than in the United States, there was less opportunity for founding such institutions for women. The women of Europe, on the whole, waited much longer for a chance to prove that their intellectual capacity was comparable to that of men. In Germany and Austria women were not admitted to universities until about thirty years ago and they were not permitted to study medicine until twenty-five years ago. In 1895 a certain Doctor Emanuel Hannack published an essay in which he argued the rights of women to adjust themselves to the economic and social conditions prevailing by means of a university education. He particularly urged that they should be allowed to study medicine and tried hard to persuade both the public and the authorities concerned that a woman's mental abilities could be trained and developed as well as a man's. It was many years before his plans were carried through.

In England something very startling happened. At the University of Cambridge, it was finally conceded that women might, at least, be permitted to sit for examinations. They were not awarded degrees, however, or permitted to compete

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for the various prizes of the university. It must have proved very distressing to the authorities when shortly after women were allowed to take part, just for the fun of the thing, in the final examinations in mathematics, a woman actually came out top, and the Senior Wranglership, the highest mathematical award, went to the second-best work, done by a man. As though to prove that this was no accident or glaring exception, another woman in the same year was bracketed equal with the Senior Classic. Yet even now, the women students of Cambridge in no way participate fully in the life of the university. They live in college outside the town where the men's colleges are situated and spend a great deal of their time in buses and on bicycles making their way from the lecture halls in this masculine stronghold to their comparatively distant residence outside it.

The history of American education is full of similar experiences. Prejudice against women's entering the field of higher education was universal, and it is the greatest possible credit to women that they have managed to achieve so much in the face of so much opposition. How much energy was needlessly wasted, how many capable women must have been discouraged while these conditions lasted we need not ask. There are still some universities in the United States where women are not allowed to teach; and in co-educational universities in Europe there are still professors who take every means to keep women from attending their lectures. Women belong in the kitchen, they say. An experience of my own is to the point here. Fifteen years ago, when I sat for my medical degree, one of the examining professors advised me that a woman would be better occupied in knitting socks than in studying medicine. He could not help passing me in my examinations and I was by no means discouraged. I found that

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I was not the only student who had received such advice; he said the same to every woman who came before him. Later on, he refused to have anything to do with women students and finally excluded them altogether from his lectures.

Even leaving aside that feeling of inferiority on account of her sex which is still every woman's portion in society as it is to-day, it is easy enough to see that those who insist that women have lately had a fair chance to prove their capacities are not speaking in accordance with the facts. We know to what extent women are affected by public opinion and that this opinion gives them a lower place than men. Self-esteem is dependent upon the opinion of other people, and it is easy to understand that the low esteem in which women are held with regard to intellectual achievements already provides them with one obstacle. Lack of self-esteem is a great barrier to the development of a human being's innate gifts.

There have been pioneers among women who dared embark on a career despite all difficulties. We can guess what type of women these were—these were the fighting women who did not wish to bow their heads in marital slavery and who were full of resentment against the feminine rôle. In order to illustrate that these women had the conception they must act as if they were men, we want to mention that Mary Walker, one of the first woman suffragists, appeared in Washington in men's clothes and the women who made the deputation with her wore bloomers. Most of these pioneers wanted to escape, as we said, marital slavery. The fact that marital slavery is a purely subjective conception does not affect the circumstances. An individual's conduct is ruled not by the situation but by what he imagines the situation to be.

The first women to enter occupations outside the home were the women forced to do so by circumstances. The death

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or illness of a husband compelled them to support the family. Then came those women who remained unmarried and who had been brought up by their parents as if they were boys. This happened chiefly in families where there were no sons and the parents wanted their own work continued. Encouraged by the activities of such women as these, others ventured to test their ability. These also were of the type that did not, as a rule, marry. Economic pressure or special tastes forced them to widen their horizon in order that life should be possible for them. Not every one wanted to be a governess or a dressmaker, even among those women who came from the middle classes, where manual work was considered below the social dignity and the intellectual standing of a woman. They attempted increasingly to enter the so-called masculine professions, since those promised them greater opportunities and better pay. The first women doctors, the first women lawyers chose their professions, of course, in accordance with their early training and their discontent with the feminine rôle. If we bring to mind those pioneer women in the professions we recognize them as distinctly masculine types. Later on, when it seemed less hazardous to enter such professions, more feminine types took them up, and nowadays—in what were once regarded as the most masculine professions—we find definitely feminine women. We cannot say with any accuracy that they do not resent the feminine rôle even now, but they do not resent it so violently.

The time is not long past when a woman was expected to choose definitely between marriage or a career. Many occupations were open to celibates only. Teachers lost their posts the moment they married; indeed, I believe that this still holds with women teachers in the Government schools in England and in some parts of United States. Married women were not



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particularly welcome anywhere: it was said that they were not whole-heartedly interested in their work, that they were "clock-watchers." This criticism is certainly not true of all married women, any more than it is true of all married men who happen to be fond of their wives and children and are eager enough after the day's work to regain the fireside. And it is difficult to see more preoccupation in the haste of a married woman to go home to her family than in the haste of an unmarried man who wants to meet his sweetheart. To prove the triviality of this objection, it is only necessary to record that there are employers who definitely prefer to engage married rather than single woman. They declare that married women are more anxious to do their best work and use every effort to retain their jobs, in order that the family may be secure; an unmarried worker on whom no one is dependent has less feeling of responsibility.

It was considered until recently that women who take up work in one of the so-called masculine professions are unfitted for marriage, and it was even claimed that the greater their success was the more unhappy and tense they became. Certainly this may well be true if the profession in question has been chosen out of protest against the feminine rôle instead of interest in the profession itself. It entirely depends upon what an individual's goal is. How many men, after progressing a certain distance in their careers, become dissatisfied with the particular occupation they have chosen! This is due to the fact that their aim was to conquer, not to contribute to society. They were bound to grow dissatisfied. Equally, if the goal of a woman is to show that she can accomplish *as much as* a man she will not be happy even if she proves it; for as soon as she proves it she has nothing else to inspire her.

It is not the place here to examine all the impulses which

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lie behind a choice of profession. Women have much the same incentives as men in electing to take up one kind of work rather than another. In exactly the same way as men, they are guided by their personal ideal: they have the same motives and go about making their goal concrete in the same way. The style of life is formed according to this personality ideal, according to the way in which the individual thinks he or she can best secure superiority. We have already seen that women, in addition to the normal inferiority feelings of all human beings, have their femininity as an additional source for inferiority feelings. If a woman desires to escape from the fact that she is a woman, therefore, she will set her personality ideal so that she can make it concrete only by acting *as if* she were a man. Since sex cannot be changed, a great part of her energy will be wasted in attempts to achieve this mistaken goal and little will be left for real accomplishment.

Such a woman, striving *as if* she were a man, becomes strained and nervous and will attempt constantly to provoke herself to effort by thinking to herself and by saying, "What might I not have accomplished if only I were not a woman!" This attempt to escape from the feminine rôle is at the very root of her failure to achieve full development and distinction. She will always be self-conscious: she will always be on the look-out to see if she is given the same appreciation that a man in her place would obtain. She will be just so far unable to concentrate on her work; for the best way to win a race is never to look backwards and sideways to see how one is getting on in comparison with a competitor of whom one is afraid. Of course, she never *is* treated in the same way as a man. It is all too easy to lay the blame for failure on her sex. If two people, a man and a woman, are working in the same field and something goes wrong, there are many excuses if it

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happens to the man—it will be an accident, natural and easy to explain or correct; but if it happens to the woman, then it happened *because* she was a woman, because there is no relying upon women and so forth. Even if both are careless workers, one is a careless worker, but the other is careless because she is a woman.

Though women undeniably are handicapped in this and in other ways, it is equally true that in certain respects they only have themselves to blame for their present incomplete success in the world of work. Some of them are not—we do not say they could not be—as efficient as men. Too many of them insist on regarding a career as an alternative to marriage. Too many of them do not intend to continue work if and after they marry: obviously, in such cases, they never take their work wholly seriously. Too many of them think it would be too great an effort to run a household and carry on an occupation outside the home, and some of them really only regard their occupation as a sort of stopgap to fill up time until they find a husband; the moment they get married they are only too willing to abandon it for ever. Naturally, it would be quite impossible to feel a genuine interest in any work or profession with such ideas in mind. The whole attitude of such women is wrong. Work and a husband are no more to them than alternative means of maintenance. They do not study to increase their skill, they do not identify themselves with their work, and indeed in many cases do not even intend to take marriage very seriously either, or to exercise their fullest capacities there. The temporary activities of such women in business are not very valuable and it is inevitable that in whatever field their occupational activities lie, they will constantly be surpassed by men. The men take their work seriously, as something they intend to continue in, and strive

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continually to acquire greater and greater proficiency in that work. The women who regard an occupation as a merely temporary affair are quite prepared to leave one sort of work and take up another the moment some other field seems to offer a better salary. Thus they can never gain the status of an expert. It should be noted that according to the statistics in Margaret Elliot's book, *The Earnings of Women in Business and Professional Life*, those women who change employers not more than once or twice are the most successful, both in regard to the salaries they earn and to their actual achievements.

So long as women regard a career as a means of filling up the time until they marry, they will fail to accomplish very much. When they make up their minds, at last, that marriage is not the end of all endeavour, is not merely a meal ticket for life, they will give themselves scope to exercise their abilities in full. When they contribute to the common income of the home, when they are really companions and fellow-workers of men, they will be able to accomplish far more than we might suppose from the past.

It must be pointed out also, when we consider why to-day women fail to distinguish themselves fully in the realm of work and occupation, how great an effect is made on them by the feeling that they will *not* be able to compass very much in the way of success. Since they are discouraged, they want to secure work as quickly as possible and they snatch at the first chance. The salaries they are prepared to accept, in their haste, show how little they hope for themselves, in what low esteem they hold themselves. Men, generally speaking, allow themselves far longer for study and education, far more time to prepare themselves for their future work. We have only to examine the 1920 census statistics again to see that among

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children under the age of 16 there are 4.1% girls as against 2.2% boys employed in paid jobs. This striking difference is even more noticeable between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Then to 16.5% employed girls we find only 7.7% employed boys. Startling as this is, we find that between the ages of 20 and 24 years of age 21.2% of girls are employed and only 12.5% of boys. These figures tell us an infinite amount about the genuine discouragement under which women labour.

No one supposes that girls of sixteen or girls of twenty-three are regarded as better employees than boys of the same age would be. It is not that at all. The girls want to earn money as early as they can. It does not seem worth while to take pains to train themselves further. They—and their parents—are convinced that if they do, the results will not be worth the effort. They take neither their own position in the world nor their careers seriously: it is the boys who, so far as it lies within their reach, utilize those years between sixteen and twenty-four to train themselves for the future. Only very slowly, thanks to a few women here and there who have argued and insisted and taught that only a proper preparation will lead to success, are women gradually coming to recognize that if they would keep an equal footing with men they must train and educate themselves equally.

In speaking as we have done of the low opinion in which women are generally held and which is so great an obstacle for them, we must stop to ask whether it is men themselves who are so mistrustful of the capacities of the other sex. All of us have observed that often it is women who despise women and compare them unfavourably with men. Any woman who has worked with men knows that as soon as a man finds he can place confidence in a female co-worker he will regard her as an equal. There are few women who will place reliance

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on members of their own sex. Of course, this is easy enough to understand, psychologically. The lack of self-confidence which is forced upon every woman becomes generalized: she thinks that because she herself is of little value all women are of little value. In this respect women are the greatest enemies to woman's progress. In making this rather serious accusation, we hope to encourage some women to a self-confidence which they in turn will communicate to their fellow-women.

Of course, if we were to ask a woman outright for her opinion on women, she might well not give us the expected answer: she would probably not wish to admit she was convinced that women are inferior to men. Indirect questions, however, will provoke the truth. If we were to ask her, for instance, whether in her opinion women were fitted to be judges, then she might reply that she thought not, because women can never be completely objective and are always apt to be swayed by their emotions. If we come to ask ourselves why this opinion should be held we shall find that a capacity for abstract thought has always been denied to women. Yet there was a time when it was women of whom men asked advice upon grave matters. The legends and fairy tales of humanity are only in part a fiction. They also embody a great deal of the actual happenings of times past. It was not only in legend but in fact that the Greeks and the Germans of ancient times used to go to women for counsel, for advice upon future action and for a glimpse into the future. We need not ask whether woman has grown inherently less wise, less intelligent than she was in those days, or whether it is simply that the training of women and their position in society have changed. We do not need to refer back to so remote a past even, for history gives many proofs of the higher esteem in

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which women were once held. At a later time, as women were less esteemed, their advice was asked by men more secretly: and yet in our own times how often has it been shown, and how widely is it believed, that eminent men make it a practice to consult upon important affairs of state and of business with "wise women"?

If we ask the average woman to-day if in her opinion a woman physician can be as reliable as a man physician she will say as a rule that she thinks so: but she will generally consult a man if she herself is ill. Some women will insist that to become a first-rate doctor demands intensive study and training such as are beyond the capacity of women. In the same way, nine out of ten women prefer a male hairdresser to a female hairdresser: nine out of ten will patronize men tailors and insist that they are more skilful and more accurate than women. They do not even trouble to find out whether this is true, but accept the ready-made opinion of all their acquaintances, because, in fact, they are only too ready to admit the inferiority of their own sex. Their own self-esteem would suffer cruelly if they were forced to admit that *some* women at least were more efficient and successful than they themselves were and they do not choose to admit that any women have accomplished notable things, since they themselves have lacked the courage to go ahead.

This general discouragement on the part of women is so fundamental that it is often difficult to distinguish cause and effect. Girls do not grow up in the same circumstances as boys, as we have seen, and their inferiority feeling about their sex is so firmly interwoven with their whole personalities, and with their whole outlook on life, that it takes an enormous amount of stimulus to counteract it. Little is accomplished by giving girls the same education as boys if their whole attitude

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towards life is different from the start. We know that character is formed in the early years and all experiences in later life are merely worked out according to an already established subjective point of view. The girl sets about her work with a far greater feeling of inadequacy than a boy does and her difficulties are far greater than his in striving to develop her full capacities.

The position in the family life held by a girl's mother has a far greater effect on the girl herself than is commonly recognized: and so also has the attitude which the girl's mother adopted towards her sons and towards her daughters respectively. "Only a girl" is a phrase which decides the fate of innumerable women. To be "only" a girl is a disadvantage and influences a child's opinion about herself and her sex very considerably. Those who insist that women can easily enough prove their equality with men, granted the same education and freedom as men over a sufficiently long period, are entirely in error; ideas of inequality have been stamped into them from the cradle and continue to affect them throughout life.

Where a girl is so fortunate as to grow up in a family where that "only a girl" is neither believed in nor suggested and where the equal capacities of men and women are taken for granted, we can observe results which are striking indeed. Let us turn to the evidence on this point afforded by Doctor Rudolf Allers in his book *Das Werden der sittlichen Persönlichkeit*. He reports upon a test made in a co-educational school in Germany at the end of last year: the school or "Gymnasium" in question corresponds to an American high school plus about two years of college. In intelligence tests the boys came out higher on the average than the girls, but among the girls there were some who displayed a very high



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degree of intelligence indeed. It was found without exception that these markedly intelligent girls came from families in which the mother followed an occupation on an equal footing with her husband. The mother, that is to say, was either the father's partner or fellow-worker in business or had a profession of the same standing as that of the father. In consequence, these girls had grown up without any idea that the position of women was inferior. "Only a woman" was something that naturally did not occur to them. It was by no accident that girls from these families displayed exceptional intelligence; they had had the proper start in life, the start that only boys get as a rule; and as a result their development had not been retarded by loss of courage and self-esteem.

Slowly a change for the better, rather along these lines, is taking place all the world over. The self-confidence of women is growing and shows results. The census of 1910 and the census of 1920 showed a distinct change in the occupational work of women. The actual number of women in employment was shown as less in 1920 than in 1910, the diminution being explained by the fact that many agricultural workers were unemployed in 1920 and not by the fact that the number of manual workers had actually decreased. But apart from this decrease, the figures upon analysis show that there has been a distinct shifting from manual work to intellectual work. The numbers of women in agricultural, manufacturing and domestic employment had decreased: from 21.1% to 10.1% in agriculture; from 22.9% to 20.7% in manufacturing processes; from 23.0% to 17.4% in paid domestic work. In the intellectual field, the number of women in clerical work had increased from 9.9% to 21.0%. These changes show not only the working of the law of supply and demand but the attempt women have made to take advantage of their increasingly

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better training. The census figures for 1930 are at the moment of writing not available but it is considered by competent organizations that the number of women in employment will be found to have increased by fifteen per cent.

The progress which women are making to-day will still further increase the progress which women will make to-morrow. The more courageous and efficient mothers are, the more courageous and efficient will their daughters be. The less girls are thought and spoken of as "only" girls, the greater will be their chances to develop.

We should be grossly unjust if we did not consider the occupation of housewife. Out of the thirty-four million women over sixteen years of age in the United States, twenty-two and one half millions are working in their own homes without other occupation. Are we to suppose them idle? The question is absurd when we recall, each of us in our own experience, to what an astonishing degree the idle daughters of last century have diminished—the daughters who thought it rather an imposition to be asked to dust the drawing-room and merely hung around until they found a husband willing to transplant them to a home of their own which they were as a rule totally incompetent to manage. Those women occupied in the home—who get no specified salary and therefore are not included in the lists of women in paid employment—work, many of them, far harder than any others. They often prove themselves as efficient as any professional worker. It takes intelligence and versatility, good judgment and a rare combination of skill in several professions at once, to make a good housewife. Yet this profession is not highly esteemed and is seldom chosen as the goal of any woman.

Joseph Hill's book, *Women in Gainful Occupations*, speaks warmly of the profession of housewife. In a proper

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conception of this profession should be included not only the cleaning of the house, the cooking and marketing, the bringing up of children, but something much more than all these. The happiness of the whole family depends to a much greater extent than is generally believed on the skill with which the house is run and the spirit that inspires the domestic atmosphere. The fact that women despise this kind of work comes from the attitude of women themselves. They are discontented in such a position and they are inclined to give more weight to trifles than is necessary. We know that when an individual is dissatisfied, he always pays more attention to trifles than if he is satisfied with his position. And, of course, the economic dependence of women on their husbands is another factor which makes the profession of housewife seem undesirable. We live in a world where the only visible appreciation for any kind of work done lies in the money that is paid for doing it. The profession of housewife is unpaid and therefore is not appreciated.

The running of a household, nowadays, is a much less onerous task than it was in the past. A housewife is no longer called upon to spin or weave the family clothes or concoct from herbs the family medicines. The scholastic education of her children is in other hands, often from the earliest age. With the rapid development of all kinds of machinery for labour-saving in the home, the time actually needed for doing the housework is greatly less than of necessity it was in the past. This, also, helps towards an undervaluation of the work itself. Yet to be a good housewife to-day demands a high degree of skill and of training. The technique of keeping house can be perfected to an amazing extent, so that the least effort will produce the best results.

But the profession of housewife demands much more than

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skill merely in keeping house. The whole spirit of the family depends on the spirit of the wife and mother. Without any question, the family is the central unit, the nucleus from which all the abilities and capacities of human beings develop. Those who have realized how character is formed, in reading other chapters in this book, will fully grasp the importance of the woman's position in her home, in the midst of her family. The greatest task of any woman is to render as agreeable and as fruitful as possible the actual time that the other members of the family pass in the home, and this is her greatest task, whether she devotes her life wholly to the family or whether she also follows some occupation outside the house as well. It is especially important that she should avoid over-emphasizing the importance of the trivial details of everyday life; for it is in over-emphasizing these that the home is made uncomfortable and unloved.

It is inevitable with all human beings that unless any given activity has a specific purpose or goal no real accomplishment will come about: if women are interested in things outside their own homes only in a casual way and for no real end, their interest will never be fruitful, the results will never be what they wish. It is useless to take up any kind of study or interest unless we have a definite aim in view. The aim of a housewife, who determines to take an interest in things outside the home, may perfectly well be to make the home itself more beautiful, or to keep up with the progress of the cultural life of the community, to make herself a more alert and well-informed companion to her husband and children and, in consequence, avoid the mistake of overstressing the importance of the little things of the household itself. Such aims will provide the necessary impetus: but an aim there must be,

The number of women who combine with their housework

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a special occupation outside the home is on the increase. It is hardly a problem nowadays whether women should have occupations or interests outside the home; it is rather a problem how they can best combine running a house with an occupation or interest outside it. Women who, without other assistance, manage a home where there is a numerous family, have the greatest difficulty in finding an interest of their own: but it might often well be considered whether any particular woman in such circumstances might not find an occupation outside the home which would enable her to employ some one else to free her from much of the housework and give her the time and the chance to follow her own external interests. In this connection, it is interesting to observe that in some countries, at any rate, colleges of domestic science are turning out educated girls who find the task of running another person's household in a really efficient way quite to their liking. Such women receive a good salary and are not treated as menials but as the equals of the professional women whose activities they supplement. Many times recently I have heard intelligent girls who wish to become artists or writers express the opinion that if such positions were open to them, they would far rather follow the occupation of housekeeper while in their leisure hours striving to perfect themselves at painting or writing, than take the more usual course of becoming stenographers or teachers. The improvement of educational facilities for women is rendering women constantly more free: and so is the recognition that a combined education at home and at school from a very early age can contribute more usefully to the training of children for life and to their happiness than if they are reared in the isolation of the family circle. No woman to-day is really expected to be "a perfect slave" to her household nor is she greatly admired if she chooses to be one.

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In drawing our conclusions about the position of women in business we must recapitulate: that women are proving themselves increasingly more efficient in any kind of work they happen to be really interested in. If the standing of women were really to be based, from the start, on a true equality with men, then there would be nothing they could and would not accomplish. Up to now, however, women have made the mistake of believing that they must prove that they can carry through any task as though they were men. By doing so they create for themselves a serious obstacle. From the very beginning, from the cradle, we must convince them that the sexual rôle cannot be changed and that it is not in fact a disadvantage to be a woman. Women should be glad they are women; they would not then feel a dislike for the peculiarly feminine tasks. There would then be no distinction in value between masculine and feminine occupations: the question of prestige in the kind of work done would never arise. If there were a true equality, then each individual would be esteemed for doing the kind of work for which he or she was best fitted, according to physiological equipment and past training. If there were any question of merit, it would rest upon the degree of courage and social interest with which they carried out and pursued their occupation.



## *Part Three*





## CHAPTER I

### *The Explanation of Sex to Children*

WE have found two great factors at work influencing the development of girls and qualifying their attitude towards themselves and to the world. One is the way in which they gain their knowledge of sex, the other is the cultural view of the position of women. In looking for hints how our situation may be improved, let us first of all consider the child's earliest acquaintance with the facts of sexual life.

If we ask an adult when he first learned about sex, he may give us one of many answers; but he will generally place his earliest knowledge between the ages of six and fourteen. No doubt this was the period when he first made some sort of organized attempts to obtain information, but it was by no means the first time he asked questions. He recalls, perhaps, some striking experiences between those years; but his fundamental point of view was already crystallized. In the age he mentions he was working out the facts of sexual life; but in reality he was only adapting, extending and correcting what he had learned already. It is interesting, incidentally, to observe how late in life a child can continue to believe in storks or cabbage patches; and the fables with which his head is filled may easily prevent him from pursuing his interest in this great task and art which is before him in an objective, helpful and common-sense way.

When they are about three years old children begin exploring the world around them and asking questions on every-

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thing they notice. By the age of four a child will certainly have asked questions bearing on the differences of the sexes and the way babies are born. In accordance with the answers they receive they will either go on to ask more or they will stop and pay no further attention to the problem until they are faced so strongly with it that they can no longer avoid it. Among the first group some children will be found whose interest was aroused because they found the reaction of the individuals they asked so very puzzling; such children, indeed, often persecute their elders with their curiosity. Amongst the second group there will be some children who are frightened by the answers they received or who were warned never to mention the subject: these will remain tense and ill-informed even when the time has come in which they urgently need knowledge. If their questions are answered wisely, they will learn as much as they want to know until new aspects of sexual life and new problems occur to them with the approach of adolescence.

When a child asks his first questions on sex, he is interested in the subject, just as he is in everything else around him. He wants to know what the stars are; he wants to know how an automobile runs; and he wants to know how babies are born. He gets plain answers on every subject but one. On this one subject his mother is generally embarrassed. She interprets his questions from a quite different standpoint and from this instant her understanding of the child begins to fail. The child asked because he had so far got satisfactory answers to his questions and he felt a great confidence and trust in the ability of his parents to help him. The moment he begins to ask about sex, the atmosphere changes. His mother gives him an evasive answer, or she laughs and says that he is cute, or she lies, or she scolds him for asking such an indecent question,

## *The Explanation of Sex to Children*

or she tells him, "you will learn all about that when you grow older." And in modern times another kind of answer has arisen, at least as bad as the others. She will look portentous and, as it were, fling an encyclopedia at him where all he wanted was a sentence.

It is still general, however, for parents to lie. His mother will tell him that the stork brought him, or the doctor brought him in a black bag, or he was found in a cabbage patch, or he was fished out of a lake. In any case she will show herself rather at a loss and the child will see how disturbed she is. He knows now that he has touched a peculiar subject, one he would better have left untouched, and his inferiority feelings on the score of his age and experience will be heightened. He has again discovered something that adults know and he doesn't, that is permissible for adults but not for him. He will have new material for phantasy and he will attribute great importance to it.

In one other way his later attitude towards sex is being affected. His parents may be in great fear lest he should masturbate and then will look to see whether he sleeps with his hands outside the blankets or inside. Some parents will go a step further and forbid their children even to touch their sexual organs. In this way they rouse their intensest interest in this part of the body. Not understanding why it has such a tremendous significance the children will try to find out; and sometimes they connect in the cleverest manner this tabu with the embarrassment of their parents on the subject of sex. Here, too, an additional stimulus is being given towards a misunderstanding of sex and of the sexual rôle.

When parents tell lies, the child will sooner or later discover it; and from the moment of discovery his trust in his parents is gone. It is a great tragedy for a child to find out that his

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parents are not to be trusted. He cannot quite believe them now, whatever they say. But he is still dependent on his parents and this crisis of disappointment is not passed easily.

Latterly the idea has become current that parents should tell their children about sex in the proper way before they gain their knowledge from dirty stories told by other children or by unscrupulous adults. This is very good; but we have still to consider what is the proper way. For the most part parents delay too long; they put the age when the child is to be told too late. Often also they make a special occasion of it and so cannot avoid over-impressing the child or surprising him. There is one best time to give him information. It is when he asks a question. This is a proof that he is already occupied in mind with the subject and prepared to receive an answer. And there is one best method of answering him. It is to tell him what he wants to know, no more and no less. The answer should never go beyond the question; it should be short, it should be correct, and it should set his mind at ease. If a long explanation is given, the child becomes puzzled; the problem will appear more mysterious than ever and the result will be the same as if his question had been evaded. With the other questions he asks he is satisfied with a short answer; sometimes, indeed, he does not even bother to listen; his attention is caught up by something new. If he does not receive the same kind of answer as he is accustomed to hearing he will become suspicious. We should mention, in addition, that if we are not answering his own question but telling him about what we think, from an adult standpoint, he should know, we are stimulating ideas and feelings for which he has as yet no possible use. Let us make a comparison. When he asked what made the automobile go he was not given a lecture on

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mechanics. Mechanics, however, for adult purposes is a very useful science.

When an explanation of sex is given by a teacher to a whole class there are bound to be misinterpretations. Each child makes out of what the teacher says exactly what he wants to, exactly what fits his preconceptions and his style of life. With such a class lecture there is no opportunity to correct the child's mistakes and to tell him just what he wants to know. To see how true this is we need only have overheard children talking to each other after such a lesson. Some avoid the subject altogether, some treat it as a joke, some are frightened, some think it indecent. Each brings to it the attitude he has formed in the family and each takes the same attitude away with him. It is thus far better that explanation of sex in the school should be given individually and in private, in circumstances in which the child feels confident and by a teacher whom he trusts and with whom he feels free to ask all the questions he wants. And here, too, it is by far the best if the co-operation between the children and the teacher is such that the child can ask when he wants to know without reserve and the initiative can be left to him.

There is a popular belief that children can be injured by the so-called "street explanation" of their playmates. Of course it is best if the child has no need to learn from such a source; but the dangers of the "street explanation" are vastly overrated. No child was injured by the remarks of his comrades who was not already prepared to misinterpret. Children do not look on each other as "authorities" in the same way that they look on adults; and if a child hears something from his schoolmates he makes up his own opinion of its truth. Where he is in doubt and where his parents have preserved his confidence, he will refer the subject to them; and they are given

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another opportunity of telling him the truth in simple words. Even if he is not quite sure of his parents he will ask an older brother or sister. It is only when there is no co-operation in the family that he will keep his problems to himself; and in that case it is not the "street explanation" which is at fault. But for that he would probably have learned nothing at all.

We should give a warning also against too poetic an explanation. The relation between the sexes is not very much like the relation between flowers; it is a relation, primarily, of human beings and human personalities. Nor is it helpful to picture love in romantic terms. A child whose acquaintance with sex is derived from glowing accounts of its romance and divinity is doomed to disappointment in later life. He will look for poetry and find human relationship. Fear of men and frigidity can be the result of such ornate explanations. We must say again that the best explanation is the clearest and simplest, given in a way which avoids any shock and excitement for the child. Perhaps the hesitation before what is unknown to experience can never be entirely prevented, but it can be diminished so that the young man and the young woman have no more tension with regard to their sexual lives than they would feel before any new situation in which they saw opportunities and the prospect of happy and contributory activity.

Masturbation should never be treated as in any way a crime or as incurring disastrous consequences. Amongst small children, as we have seen, it is no more than a bad habit and a sign of interest in their own sensations, instead of in the world around them. In later life it is an expression of discouragement and lack of interest in the other sex. By increasing social interest, masturbation disappears automatically. It is quite easy to see that adolescents or adults masturbate only when they

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are shrinking before the problems of life and need a quick and easy heightening of their ego feelings. Encouragement in facing problems frees adolescents immediately from any masturbatory "compulsions," especially when they feel that nobody is shocked and they are at liberty to do what they like. Of course they are; nobody can stop them; but very often whatever seems to be forbidden is regarded as a vital necessity.

Young people should not be frightened with pictures of the danger of venereal diseases. They should know about them, it is true, but no greater stress should be put on them than on other aspects of general hygiene. The fear of venereal disease can often be misused as a means of avoiding contact with the other sex. To catch a venereal disease is not a punishment for bad behaviour; it is a misfortune like catching pneumonia. Homosexuality and syphilidophobia are often the consequence of stressing venereal diseases too strongly in education.

In one word sexual education should be a part of general education. Sexual activity should be taken as a natural thing, a part of the whole of life, to be shared by every normal and healthy individual and expressed in the most co-operative possible way. In this realm, too, young people should understand that they are responsible for their own actions, not the victims of drives. They must be prepared to assume their responsibility with confidence and common sense; and they will be ready to do this if they have a true understanding of their sexual functions and their sexual rôle.



## CHAPTER II

### *The Equality of the Sexes*

Is it really such an art to be a woman? Under present cultural conditions it is not always easy to carry through the feminine rôle with courage, poise and social interest. It has been our purpose in this book to show where mistakes have been made by women as well as by men. It is our mistakes which teach us most, and in consequence it may seem that these chapters have been full of dismal histories. We have told them, however, in the hope that by recognizing these misunderstandings we shall no longer repeat them. In every case the most important point to discover is *where* the mistakes began, how the individual first developed his misunderstanding. In tracing back these errors of men and women to their childhood we have found them originating in very similar conditions; indeed, the circumstances often repeat themselves in different life-histories with almost photographic fidelity. Yet we have seen also that the same circumstances do not always issue in the same style of life; each individual has his own creative power to make his own interpretation. We have found, moreover, that the interpretations of childhood do not act as inescapable compulsions; as soon as he has seen his mistake an individual is in the position to alter his interpretation.

Now this point of view does not appeal to everybody. Especially it does not appeal to those who would rather suffer and accuse fate than meet their problems courageously and

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have no one to accuse for failure but themselves. And, sad as it may seem, there are plenty of people who would rather feel that others were to blame than set to and improve the situation by their own efforts. These are the neurotics: it is their whole activity and art to find a way to replace the simple fact, "I won't," by the most specious argument, "I can't." And we can sympathise with them when we see that mistakes were made in their education, injustices were done to them and their self-esteem was challenged until it became very easy for them to take refuge in the alibi, "I can't." It is to be feared that even after reading what we have said they will find only a new excuse for their lack of courage. "Yes, I understand," they will feel. "I became what I am because my parents made mistakes and my school teacher made mistakes and I wasn't given the right training in sex and the cultural attitude towards women is wrong. So I made mistakes, too, and I couldn't have been expected to be any different."

Well, we have to improve the position for future generations; but even for ourselves we must say that if we recognize a mistake we are really under an obligation to correct it. It is never too late to correct it; and surely it is better to do so than to continue making the same mistake. If we have cleared up the situation our last excuse is gone; we have no longer any right to accuse heredity or fate or education or environment or other people; we have not even the right to accuse ourselves. All that remains is to accept responsibility for our actions and for the use we make of our experiences. No difficulty in our position can ever free us from responsibility for our actions. It is much easier to say, "If this and that had not happened to me I should have been quite different"; but from the moment we say it we *can* be different. However severe it may seem, every one will understand that to stick to

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a mistaken point of view when an individual has learned better puts the responsibility for all the consequences on his own shoulders.

Now with this in mind it becomes a little difficult to describe the art of being a woman. It may seem that we are accusing women because they have not succeeded better. But let us make a big admission. Progress and change are possible; yet there is never the possibility of making a perfect solution for our problems. All we can do is to substitute great mistakes by small mistakes. We can try to acquit ourselves well in this art; and we do not need to feel ourselves failures if we are not a hundred per cent perfect.

We have seen that a proper explanation of sex will help us to improve the situation and to diminish mistakes in the future. One second point, the cultural status of women in our own days, will take a longer time and more co-operative effort by everybody before we can approximate to the best conditions. And this is a very deep and serious problem; for, after all, even the explanation of sex depends upon the actual and the potential relationships between men and women.

On paper equality has been achieved. The laws of every modern State regard citizens from the same standpoint, whether they are men or women, and guarantee them absolute equality. We can immediately see a difference in status, however. Women *may* earn equal salaries with men; but on the whole they don't. They *may* hold public offices equally with men; but on the whole they don't. So long as women have not freed themselves from their discouragement and their inferiority feelings; so long as men still keep a superior attitude towards women in their hearts; just so long equality can never be realized.

The place where real equality must begin is where it is

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least looked for yet most obviously to be found: in the home. The institution of marriage and family life needs to be re-organized on the basis of an unconditional recognition of the equality of men and women. As soon as co-operation between the sexes has started and the battle for prestige is over, mothers will change in their attitude towards their children. They will bring up boys and girls without measuring them against each other; they will consider the individualities of their children without regard to sex. Interests and capacities will be allowed to develop freely, without any limit except the welfare of others. It is the parents' part to guide and encourage, not to restrict or compel. Of course a mother cannot overlook the sex of her children or even bring them up to the same tasks: but there should be no valuation in any difference that is made. And it is not only so; no limit should be put to the girls' development, even in the tasks and interests of boys. Whatever cannot be done by friendly influence is best not done at all; and if girls are brought up with social feeling and interest in their possibilities of contribution they will spontaneously equip themselves for the art of being a woman. It is only where there is a difference in valuation that a girl will envy the tasks of a boy.

This demand that the differences between the sexes should never be subject to a valuation involves also, of course, all the indirect valuations that can so often occur in marriage. The moment one member of a family has a position of a special consideration, the others, and especially the members of the other sex, will feel their inferiority. The personality ideal will be established in the image of the favoured individual, but the low self-esteem of the others will hinder them from realizing their personality ideal and so continually remind them of their inferiority. If this too prominent individual is the father, the

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girls will continue to meet the general underestimate of their sex outside of their homes and it will be unfortunate if they meet it in the family circle too. The mother, of course, is a powerful influence; she also is an adult; but if even the mother is subordinated to the father, what can the girls expect for themselves? They will feel "I can do nothing unless I become as strong as a man . . ."; and with that the whole resentment against the feminine rôle is established.

It is very important also that children should not remain uncertain about their sexual rôle. By the age of two years they should know definitely, and once for all, that they are boys or girls. We often find little girls wishing to be boys and thinking that perhaps they could change if they cut their hair short or wore boy's clothing. The parents are often pleased enough to escape giving any sexual information. They are rather amused by the girl's *naïveté*, and teasingly hold out the prospect of a possible change. The little girl's wish, however, should give the parents something to think about. They should understand that it is not the result of a caprice but of the girl's estimate of the recognition given to the two sexes. It witnesses to the fact that she is already discontented with her situation, that is to say, with her sex. If it is taken jokingly the girl still hopes for a change. She will prepare herself for it by behaving as boyishly as she can and when she finds that no change is possible she is left with a deep disappointment and with a style of life adapted to acting *as if* she were a boy. The parents should rather be interested in finding out her reasons for discontent and persuading her that as much can be accomplished by being a girl as by being a boy.

School can give the next great help. From school age on, a child spends the greater amount of the daytime in school and so it plays a most important part in his life. Its task is not

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only to give him information but also to prepare him for life. It is there that the child gains his first training in making friends and in being friends. School also represents to the child what the problem of occupation represents to the adult. The new system of co-education is an aid in letting the children become acquainted with members of the other sex and letting them prove their equality in practice. There are difficulties, however, in co-education; some of the teachers are not themselves convinced that the sexes are equal and they continue to give preferential treatment to boys. Girls develop quicker than boys, in body and mind, between the ages of two and sixteen; and it might provoke inferiority feelings if they saw boys who were younger than themselves, mentally and physically, being given more consideration. Perhaps the plan of grouping together children of equal mentality rather than of equal age might help to adjust this point.

Co-education in later years, in grammar schools and high schools, again has its problems. If boys and girls came to it with a true understanding of their sexual rôle there would be no difficulties, but as long as sex is considered an enigma, boys and girls will try to unravel it and they will get themselves into trouble and conflicts. At colleges and universities, of course, where the sexual consciousness is matured, co-education is by now taken for granted and provides an excellent opportunity for increasing comradeship and a real sense of equality.

There are many aspects of daily life which need adjustment. We can refer to no more than a few of them. The sense of responsibility must be changed and responsibility must be shared equally by the sexes. One of the greatest injustices done to women to-day is in the treatment of unmarried mothers. Charity can never remedy the situation; it

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will remain charity and no legal right. Even if the father of an illegitimate child contributes money to its support the mother is still made solely responsible for the training and education of the child. There is no call to punish a woman for having loved without taking precautions; and the moment men had to bear the same consequences as women for love outside of marriage they would understand the cruelty and injustice of the present position. The recognition of common-law wives is the first step to improve the situation; but there are still great numbers of people who would open their arms and their homes to the father of such a child but never to the mother.

Another injustice is in the treatment of prostitutes. We may have what opinion we like of the "polygamous instinct" of men and of the "sin" of prostitution; but the moment it is illegal for a woman to sell the use of her body it should be illegal for a man to buy it. As long as we live in a capitalistic world—and there is no sign that our system will change in the near future—just so long life will adapt itself to the laws of supply and demand. If men are willing to pay for love, there will always be women to accept their money. To persecute one party to the bargain only puts that party into the worst position of inferiority and is a challenge to unsociable behaviour. All these problems are so linked up with sociological conditions that a psychologist could not be expected to tackle them and solve them single-handed. At least we can conclude from the psychological side, however, that when women have given up the inferiority feeling of being only women, when they are trained in the best contribution they can make to our culture, when they are courageous enough to stand on their own feet, they will not need to use means of weakness to improve their standard of living; they will not need to

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accept the attention of a man just because he can provide money and they will not need to "collect scalps" to heighten their self-esteem.

Marriage, of course, must be made more attractive for both sexes; for it is in marriage and that smallest of all states, the home, that the equality of the sexes can find its most immediate and fruitful expression. And men and women must be prepared for marriage through character training and education in co-operation. Divorce laws must be established so that a divorce does not need to injure the dignity or the reputation of one of the partners; and such a divorce court as we have foreshadowed in our chapter on marriage should decide whether the incompatibility is real or the expression of a temporary discontent. The responsibility for the children must be shared equally and the law must protect men against the possibility of being imposed upon as an easy source from which to secure money for a good time after a divorce.

Professions should be opened to women wherever they can show their capacity and no profession should be reserved for men only. The demand, of course, includes the necessity of equal payment for equal accomplishment. The equality of the sexes would then have a practical expression and the quite superfluous friction between the sexes would be ended.



### CHAPTER III

#### CONCLUSION: *The Art of Being a Woman*

IT is in our power to bring about conditions in which girls will no longer suffer from the feelings of inferiority that have hitherto pursued them; in which they will face the world with undiminished courage and act as responsible, independent and equal partners with men in solving the problems of life. What can we do for women who are already mature? We cannot prevent their difficulties. What can we do to cure them? Can these adult women live a happy and fruitful life?

To those women who are fighting against their lot and to those who have resigned too early in the struggle we can say that every problem can be solved with increasing success and every difficulty can be diminished. When we are discouraged we are no less energetic, but we struggle on the useless side of life. We fight for prestige or with infinite artifice we construct an escape into disease. If we do not meet them, the problems and difficulties remain. They accumulate and press in even more heavily because we are not meeting them. To face life successfully is to adapt ourselves to present conditions; to take inequalities as the common misfortunes of our culture, not as private woes and occasions for grudges, and to work in the common interest to remove them.

A true self-esteem and self-confidence prevents an individual from wanting the impossible and prevents him from ceasing to work for the highest possible. When faced with

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difficulties, we are not compelled to say, "I would like to go ahead, but the difficulties are too great." We may say, instead, "The difficulties are great, but I will go ahead in spite of them." It is this phrase "in spite of" that should be the inspiration of every woman who feels handicapped through being a woman. Every woman can accomplish anything she seriously wants in spite of the fact that she is a woman: and in this consists her best fulfilment of the feminine rôle.

There is no need to draw up special rules for a woman's actions and behaviour. If she is without tension, if she is interested in others, if she has learned to co-operate, she will spontaneously find the approach. The more friendships she has and the more friendships she can give, the happier she will be. To be courageous means to feel at ease, to feel at home in the world. We feel at home when we are among friends. If we have a hostile attitude towards the world we feel bothered and defensive; we cannot adjust ourselves because we do not like to adjust ourselves to such a wicked world.

But women can trust themselves and believe in their value; and the way to do it is by contribution, the one evidence that they are worth while. Women can esteem their own sex, for women also can fulfil the responsibilities of a fellow-man. And, if they are assured of this value, men will agree with them; for men are brought up by women and they form their opinion of women's value from the guidance they receive from women in their childhood.

Once more we see, therefore, that it is women who must change the cultural position which women are given; and it is women who must change the opinion which men have. They cannot do it by claiming more than their share. They cannot do it by any of the thousands of ways of going on

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strike. They can do it only by acting as equals and accepting the responsibilities of equals. The task is in their own hands.

THE ART OF BEING A WOMAN can never consist in being a bad imitation of a man. It can consist only in being equal, independent and co-operative; in understanding human nature and human capacities and in applying the knowledge first of all to oneself.

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